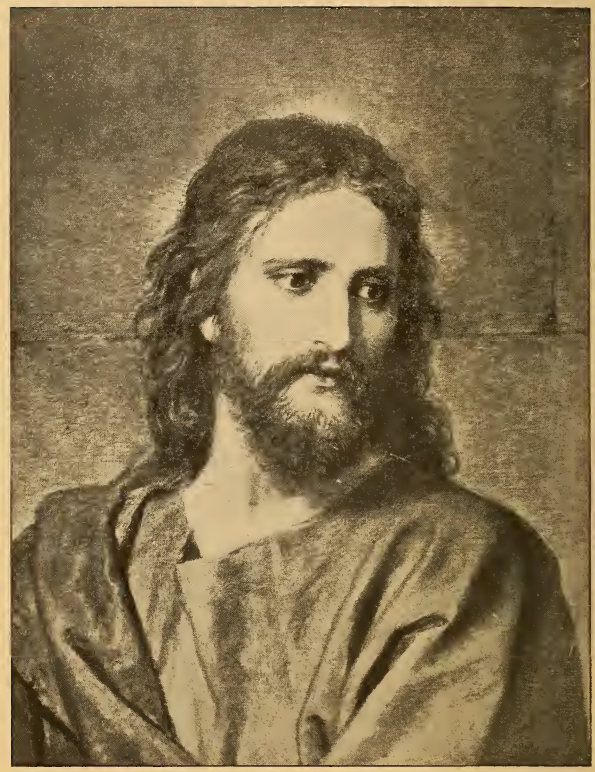
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. ..... Copyright No. .....

Shelf PR 1191

.S7

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



Ideal Portrait of Christ.

THE VISION OF CHRIST IN THE POETS

Selected Studies of the Christian Faith

AS INTERPRETED BY

MILTON, WORDSWORTH,
THE BROWNINGS, TENNYSON, WHITTIER,
LONGFELLOW, LOWELL

EDITED BY CHAS. M. STUART

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY PROF. C. W. PEARSON
OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

AUG 17 1896
42769-B2-1

CINCINNATI: CURTS & JENNINGS
NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
1896

PR1191
.S7
PR198
.S7

COPYRIGHT
BY CURTS & JENNINGS,
1896.

E.a.w. Mar. '30/15

INTRODUCTION.

POETRY rests upon the same basis as architecture, sculpture, painting, and music, and, even more than any of these noble arts, reflects the general character of the race that produces it. As the race rises, its poetry rises also. Every increase of knowledge; every refinement in manners; every growth of justice, of kindness, of human sympathy; every new perception of spiritual truth,—is speedily represented in the poetry of a nation.

The names given to the poet are significant; and the fact that in every nation they are the same, is also full of meaning. What are these names? The poet is the *seer*, who pierces some of the veils of sense and of futurity; he is the *singer*, who gives melody and beauty to the language; he is the *prophet*, who must speak because of the burden upon his heart. In old English he is called "the maker," and that, indeed, is the meaning of the word "poet," because he makes what is most valuable and permanent in the world—not clothing or houses or machinery, but faith and hope and charity.

It is for this reason that one of the noblest of modern poets has said:

> "Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
> Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares:
> The poets, who on earth have made us heirs
> Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays."

We, all of us, even the most busy and the most prosaic, value our poetry more than our prose. Indeed, we are, most of us, poetically richer than we are aware of, and would be surprised if we were to take an accurate stock of our poetic wealth. Most of what any of us can quote is poetry—the poetry of the hymn-book, the poetry of sentiment, the poetry of heroism, the poetry of humor, the poetry learned in childhood, or that which we have gone to for relief and inspiration amid the cares and sorrows of life. It is wonderful how much poetry the average man or woman has in conscious or, more frequently, in unconscious memory. A hymn is sung in Church or social meeting; you had never committed it to memory, and did not know that you knew it; but you join in the singing, and, as you proceed, each line suggests its successor, and you discover that it had been appropriated by your mind without any conscious effort on your part.

Although our century is so remarkable for its scientific discoveries and its mechanical achievements, it is not the less an earnestly religious and spiritual age. The poetry of an epoch is always the best index of its spirit, and our modern poetry

is, on the whole, remarkably pure and devout. It reflects the increased purity and deeper sympathy of our times.

Modern poetry is not merely more moral; it is also more spiritual. Milton's great epic was written to "justify the ways of God to men," and nobly, from the point of view of his time, did he accomplish his great aim. Yet "Paradise Lost," with all its artistic and moral excellences, with its matchless variety and power of verse, with its sublimity of imagination, its awful warnings against sin, its noble lessons of duty, and its glorious praises of justice and loyalty, is yet lacking in one element—that of tenderness. God is the Creator and Judge, rather than the Father and Friend, of man. "Paradise Lost" reflects the stern Puritan theology of its author's time. It was an age of creed-makers, and the intellect had unduly and injuriously triumphed over the intuitions and affections of men.

In this respect it is quite unlike the nineteenth-century poetry, of which this "Vision of Christ" is chiefly composed. Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, and Longfellow appeal much less to the reason than to the spiritual intuitions. They do not antagonize or ignore reason; they simply do not make it their sole criterion of truth. They enter more deeply into sympathy with the central truth of Christianity, that we are saved by faith and hope and love. They do not strive against reason; they simply seek to re-enforce it by other faculties, and

to go beyond it into regions which, without aid, it is powerless to explore.

Modern English poetry is thus a sublimer "Vision of Christ," the Elder Brother, the Teacher of the law of love, the spiritual Leader and Ideal of man, than the English poetry of any preceding epoch. It has none of the jangling and bitterness which disfigure so much of earlier religious poetry, and even appear in "Paradise Lost." Whittier expresses the modern feeling that, with all diversities of method and opinion, with all varieties of vesture and symbol, there is a great underlying unity of aspiration and purpose, throughout Christendom, as he sings:

> "O Lord and Master of us all,
> Whate'er our name or sign,
> We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
> We test our lives by thine!"

The Son of man is the central figure of modern poetry. Milton's first vision of him is in the ode on the "Morning of Christ's Nativity." The central thought of the poem is, that his birth is the death of paganism, that his light drives away heathen darkness, and his truth heathen error. Now, that he has come,

> "The oracles are dumb:
> No voice or hideous hum
> Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving;
> Apollo from his shrine,
> Can no more divine,
> With hollow shriek, the steep of Delphos leaving."

The poets ignore time and secondary causes. They see into the purposes of God, with whom "one day is as a thousand years," and represent that as done suddenly and by one act which is really accomplished slowly and by many subsidiary agencies. So, Mrs. Browning similarly represents Christ's triumph; but represents his victory over paganism, not as taking place at his nativity, but in that dreadful moment when, amid his last agony, he said, "It is finished!"

In her poem, "The Dead Pan," she says:

> "'T was the hour when One in Zion
> Hung for love's sake on the cross;
> When his brow was chill with dying,
> And his soul was faint with loss;
> When his priestly blood dropped downward,
> And his kingly eyes looked throneward,—
> Then, Pan was dead."

The supreme expression in our century of the struggle between faith and doubt in the soul of man is Tennyson's "In Memoriam." The alternations of hope and despair, in their intensity, are like the spiritual wrestlings of Paul and of Luther, of Bunyan and of Wesley. The heart rebels against a materialistic science.

> "We are not cunning casts in clay."

The soul's intuitions affirm that we are sons of God.

> "If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
> I heard a voice, Believe no more; . . .

A warmth within the heart would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And, like a man in wrath, the heart
Rose up, and answered, I have felt!"

Tennyson teaches that "Love is creation's final law." He sees that there is

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves;"

and in the meantime, while the work is yet incomplete, his trust is in that

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we can not prove."

This, too, is the burden of Browning's "Saul:"

"Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone will not do it, who yet alone can?"

The poets are not less emphatic in teaching the duty of love to man. Lowell makes Jesus say that he is the truest disciple, and best remembers his Lord's last command, who most loves and helps his neighbor:

"The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need—
Not what we give, but what we share;
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives himself with his alms, feeds three:
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

We have spoken of faith and love. There is another member of the great trinity of Christian graces—hope. The poets trust that "good"

> "Will be the final goal of ill;"

and that

> "What God made best, can't end worst,
> Nor what he blessed once, prove accurst."

Even upon the dark shadow of sin they seek to cast some light.

The conclusion of Longfellow's "Golden Legend," his great poem of mediæval Christianity, is in these striking lines, as he sees the personification of all evil baffled in his designs and fleeing away:

> "It is Lucifer,
> The son of mystery:
> And, since God suffers him to be,
> He, too, is God's minister,
> And labors for some good
> By us not understood!"

It is the purpose of the greater poets to point men to higher destinies; to teach them to live pure and noble lives here, and to look forward with faith and hope to a greater glory hereafter, when they shall be satisfied with the Divine likeness.

The lark that makes his lowly nest upon the ground, and yet sings as he rises heavenward, "as though he had learned music and motion of an angel," is a fit emblem of a Christian poet; for he is a

> "Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam,
> True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

Poetry is "the vision and the faculty divine." It not only points out the celestial city, but it cheers and beautifies the pathway to it. To the psalmist the heavens declared the Creator's glory. To the modern poet the seasons, as they change, are but "the varied God." To the eye of the seer the world is symbolical, and he who will consider, not the lilies only, but "the grass, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven," will find it full of beauty; for, as William Watson, the gifted English singer, who is so nobly carrying forward the best traditions of our literature, says:

> "The poet gathers fruit from every tree;
> Yea, grapes from thorns and figs from thistles, he;
> Plucked by his hand, the meanest weed that grows,
> Towers to the lily, reddens to the rose."

Poetry, as it is the first and noblest, may also be the last of the fine arts. When our present tongues have ceased, and our present knowledge has vanished away; when painting, sculpture, and architecture shall seem but as the games of children,—men, in the likeness of angels, as they walk by the river of the water of life, and stand amid the splendors of the city of pearl and gold, will still treasure poetry; for will they not sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, and will they not

> "In heaven, above the starry spheres
> Their happy hours in joy and hymning spend?"

CHARLES W. PEARSON.
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

INTRODUCTION, ... 3

JOHN MILTON, ... 21
- COMUS, ... 22
- THE COURAGE OF OBEDIENCE, ... 37
- ON HIS BLINDNESS, ... 38
- THE BETTER PART, ... 38
- THE FLIGHT OF TIME, ... 39
- ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY, ... 40

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, ... 53
- ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY, ... 54
- CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR, ... 62
- ODE TO DUTY, ... 65
- THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US, ... 67
- THE LOVE OF BOOKS, ... 68
- THE GAIN OF BOOKS, ... 68
- AFTER-THOUGHT, ... 69
- THE PLEASURES OF LIFE, ... 70

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, ... 73
- THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN, ... 74
- THE CRY OF THE HUMAN, ... 80
- COWPER'S GRAVE, ... 86

PAGE.

WORK, ... 90
SUBSTITUTION, ... 91
FUTURITY, ... 91
THE LOOK, ... 92
THE MEANING OF THE LOOK, ... 92
WORK AND CONTEMPLATION, ... 93

ROBERT BROWNING, ... 97
AN EPISTLE FROM KHARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN, ... 98
SAUL, ... 107
RABBI BEN EZRA, ... 122
CHRISTMAS-EVE, ... 131
EASTER-DAY, ... 140

ALFRED TENNYSON, ... 153
IN MEMORIAM, ... 154
THE PALACE OF ART, ... 180
THE PASSING OF ARTHUR, ... 189
IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, ... 197
MERLIN AND THE GLEAM, ... 203
SIR GALAHAD, ... 208
THE HIGHER PANTHEISM, ... 211
CROSSING THE BAR, ... 213

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, ... 217
OUR MASTER, ... 218
THE ETERNAL GOODNESS, ... 224
MY SOUL AND I, ... 227

PAGE.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, ... 237

THE LEGEND BEAUTIFUL, ... 238

THE BLIGHT OF WORLDLINESS, ... 242

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE, ... 245

THE SIFTING OF PETER, ... 247

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, ... 251

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL, ... 252

A GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAIN, ... 265

THE SEARCH, ... 271

A PARABLE, ... 273

NOTES:

ON JOHN MILTON, ... 277

ON WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, ... 289

ON ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, ... 291

ON ROBERT BROWNING, ... 293

ON ALFRED TENNYSON, ... 296

ON JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, ... 302

ON HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, ... 303

ON JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, ... 303

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PORTRAIT OF CHRIST, ... *Frontispiece.*

JOHN MILTON, ... Facing page 19

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, ... " " 51

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, ... " " 71

ROBERT BROWNING, ... " " 95

ALFRED TENNYSON, ... " " 151

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, ... " " 215

HENRY WADSWORTH LONFELLOW, ... " " 235

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, ... " " 249

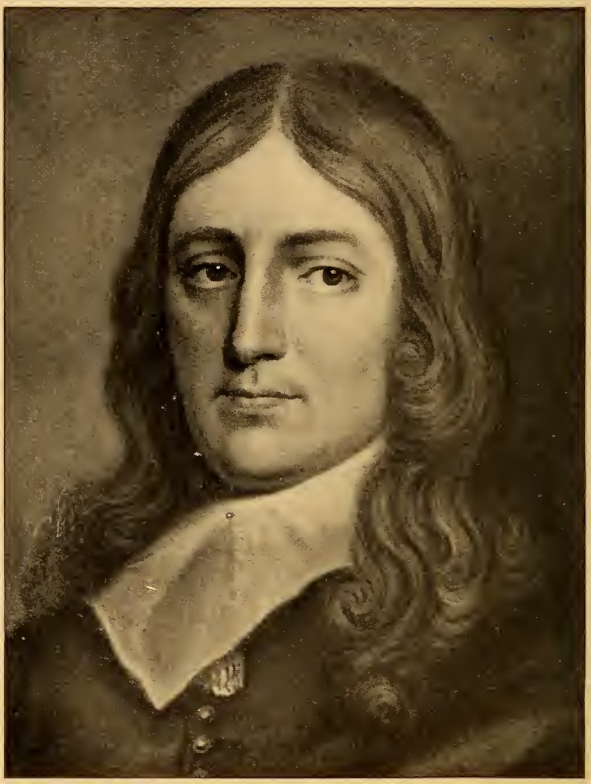
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

THE selections from Whittier, Longfellow, and Lowell, in this book, are taken by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., publishers of their works.

THE VISION OF CHRIST IN THE POETS.

Let visions of the night or of the day
Come as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that strikes his forehead is not air,
But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—
In moments when he feels he can not die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again.

—*The Holy Grail.*



John Milton

JOHN MILTON.

As to other points, what God may have determined for me I know not; but this I know, that if he ever instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, he has instilled it into mine. Ceres, in the fable, pursued not her daughter with a greater keenness of inquiry than I, day and night, the idea of perfection.

—*Milton: Letter to a Friend.*

JOHN MILTON.

(1608-1674.)

MILTON was at once poet, publicist, scholar, controversialist, statesman, and musician. From his twelfth year he hardly ever retired from his studies until midnight. This was the first source of injury to his eyes, the use of which he subsequently lost altogether. His father was a scrivener or writer, a musician, and a Protestant. The two last qualities were part of the son's inheritance. John was born in London, December 9, 1608, and at sixteen entered Cambridge University, from which he was graduated in due time with the Bachelor's and Master's degrees. After five years in retirement at Horton, Milton, in 1638, visited the Continent, being absent fifteen months. Upon his return he began at once to take part in the political and religious controversies of the time, and in 1649 became Secretary of Foreign Tongues under the new Commonwealth. After the Restoration he went into hiding until the Act of Indemnity assured him of safety. "Paradise Lost," for the copyright of which he received twenty-five dollars, was completed in 1663; and in 1670, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" were published. November 8, 1674, he died. Milton was thrice married, and by his first wife he had three daughters. His family became extinct in the third generation.

POEMS. Globe edition, edited by David Masson.

LIFE. By David Masson; also, by Stopford Brooke.

COMUS.

THE name "Comus" was given to this production after Milton's death. Its proper description is, "A Masque presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales." A "masque" is a species of drama, usually designed for a special festive occasion, and for family representation. Our selections include only the most notable passages. The teaching of this noble composition is, that purity is the cardinal virtue, the source of the highest beauty of character, and the fountain of invincible strength.

COMUS.

A young lady (Virtue) is separated from her two brothers in the depth of a wild wood at night. She is met by Comus (Temptation), who seeks to ply his arts upon her in vain. He proposes force; but the brothers, directed by the sister's Attendant Spirit, appear in time to put him and his revelers to rout. The motive of the poem is indicated in the soliloquy of the Attendant Spirit:

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold[1] here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change,[2] to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire

To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds[3]
With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mold.

THE STAY OF VIRTUE.

The following beautiful passage occurs in the meditation of the young lady while she is combating her natural fear of being alone in the darkness and wildness of the forest:

A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding[4] champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou, unblemished form of Chastity![5]
I see thee visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honor unassailed.[6]

The brothers, who are debating the situation of their sister, whom they naturally suppose to be in peril, give utterance to their different convictions in the following dia-

logue. The second brother anticipates a sorry and tragic outcome, to which replies the

First Brother. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite[7]
To cast[8] the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so,[9] while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,[10]
Or so unprincipled[11] in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir[12] the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to[13] sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled,[14] and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the center,[15] and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

Second Brother. 'T is most true
That musing Meditation most affects[16]
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his grey hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree[17]
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.[18]
You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on[19] Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;[20]
I fear the dread events that dog[21] them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned[22] sister.

First Brother. I do not, brother,
Infer[23] as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint[24] suspicion.
My sister is not so defenseless left

As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.
Second Brother. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?
First Brother. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'T is chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph[25] with arrows keen,
May trace[26] huge forests, and unharbored heaths,
Infamous[27] hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite,[28] or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged[29] with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched[30] majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin or swart[31] faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity[32] from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms[33] of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian[34] her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen forever chaste,

Wherewith she tamed the brinded[35] lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at naught
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon[36] shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed[37] brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey[38] her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft[39] converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted[40] by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes,[41] till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.[42]
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchers,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,

As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.

The Attendant Spirit, having found the brothers, warns them of the sister's danger from Comus and his band of revelers, which evokes from the elder brother a noble defense of God's care for the innocent and pure in heart.

Attendant Spirit. I 'll tell ye. 'T is not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets,[43] taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras[44] and enchanted isles,[45]
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel[46] of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs[47] mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmolding[48] reason's mintage
Charactered[49] in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts[50]
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl

Like stabled wolves,[51] or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorréd rites to Hecate[52]
In their obscuréd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting[53] by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savory herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent,[54] and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased and listened them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted[55] steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that[56] even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still[57] to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, O! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honored Lady, your dear sister.

Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And "O poor hapless nightingale," thought I,
"How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!"
Then down the lawns[58] I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbor villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

Second Brother. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?

First Brother. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period[59]
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;[60]
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.[6]

But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change,
Self-fed and self-consuméd. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let 's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly[62] legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,[63]
Harpies and Hydras,[64] or all the monstrous forms
'T wixt Africa and Ind, I 'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase[65] back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.

Comus to tempt the Lady has had her brought to a stately palace set out with all manner of deliciousness; soft music, tables spread with all dainties, and the Lady herself in an enchanted chair. Whereupon ensues the following:

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne[66] was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind[67]
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.

Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? Why do
you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes[68] which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt[69] condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been[70] tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lady. 'T will not, false traitor!
'T will not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,

These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored[71] falsehood and base forgery?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish[72] baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno[73] when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge[74] doctors of the Stoic[75] fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic[75] tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing[76] hand,
Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched[77] the all-worshiped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,[78]

Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,[79]
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds[80]
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavory in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.

It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain[81] will serve to ply
The sampler,[82] and to tease[83] the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured[84] lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.

Lady.[85] I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked[86] in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt[87] her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony

Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base-ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say,—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

Comus, defeated in his first measures, proposes others. At this point the brothers enter with drawn swords. Comus and his attendants escape. The aid of the goddess Sabrina is invoked, the Lady is released from the spell of Comus' enchantment, and conveyed in safety to her home.

THE COURAGE OF OBEDIENCE.

CYRIACK,[1] this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience,[2] friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defense, my noble task,[3]
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask[4]
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

"TO EVERYTHING A SEASON."

CYRIACK,[1] whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis,[2] with no mean applause,
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench,
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth that after no repenting draws;[3]
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.[4]
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;

For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,[5]
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,[6]
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent[1]
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent[2] which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly[3] ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best.[4] His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

THE BETTER PART.

Lady,[1] that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunned the broad way[2] and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labor up the hill of heavenly Truth,
The better part with Mary and with Ruth[3]
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,[4]

And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame.[5] Therefore be sure
Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.

THE FLIGHT OF TIME.[1]

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year![2]
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance[3] might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.[4]
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still[5] in strictest measure even[6]
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is,[7] if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY.[1]

I.

THIS is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages[2] once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit[3] should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.[4]

II.

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont[5] at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,[6]
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III.

Say, Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now, while the heaven, by the Sun's team[7] untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV.

See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards[8] haste with odors sweet!
O! run; prevent[9] them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honor first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,[10]
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.[11]

THE HYMN.

I.

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy[12] trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

. . . . . .

IV.

No war, or battle's sound,[13]
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hookèd[14] chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;[15]
And kings sat still with awful[16] eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran[17] Lord was by.

V.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began.
The winds, with wonder whist,[18]
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,[19]
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm[20] sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

VI.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,[21]
And will not take their flight,
For all[22] the morning light,
Or Lucifer[23] that often warned them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs[24] did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake,[25] and bid them go.

VII.

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,[26]
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As[27] his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need;
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

VIII.

The shepherds on the lawn,[28]
Or ere[29] the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they than[30]
That the mighty Pan[31]
Was kindly come to live with them below:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly[32] thoughts so busy keep.

IX.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet
As never was by mortal finger strook,[33]
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,[34]
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.[35]

X.

Nature, that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round[36]
Of Cynthia's seat the Airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone[37]
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.[38]

XI.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shame-faced Night arrayed;
The helmèd cherubim
And sworded seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,[39]
With unexpressive[40] notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

XII.

Such music (as 't is said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,[41]
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering[42] waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres![43]
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold[44] harmony
Make up full consort[45] to the angelic symphony.

XIV.

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold;[46]
And speckled[47] Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mold;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering[48] day.

XV.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,[49]
Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,[50]
With radiant feet the tissued[51] clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

XVI.

But wisest Fate says, No,
This must not yet be so;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify;[52]
Yet first,[53] to those ychained[54] in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep.

XVII.

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang[55]
While the red fire and smoldering clouds outbrake;
The aged Earth, aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the center shake,
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.[56]

XVIII.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The Old Dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,[57]
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges[58] the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX.

The Oracles[59] are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.[60]

XX.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.[61]

XXI.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures[62] moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens[63] at their service quaint;[64]
And the chill marble seems to sweat,[65]
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

XXII.

Peor and Baälim[66]
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered god of Palestine;[67]
And moonèd Ashtaroth,[68]
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine:
The Lybic Hammon[69] shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz[70] mourn.

XXIII.

And sullen Moloch,[71] fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly[72] king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods[73] of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

XXIV.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;[74]
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;[75]
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain, with timbreled anthems dark,
The sable-stolèd sorcerers[76] bear his worshiped ark.

XXV.

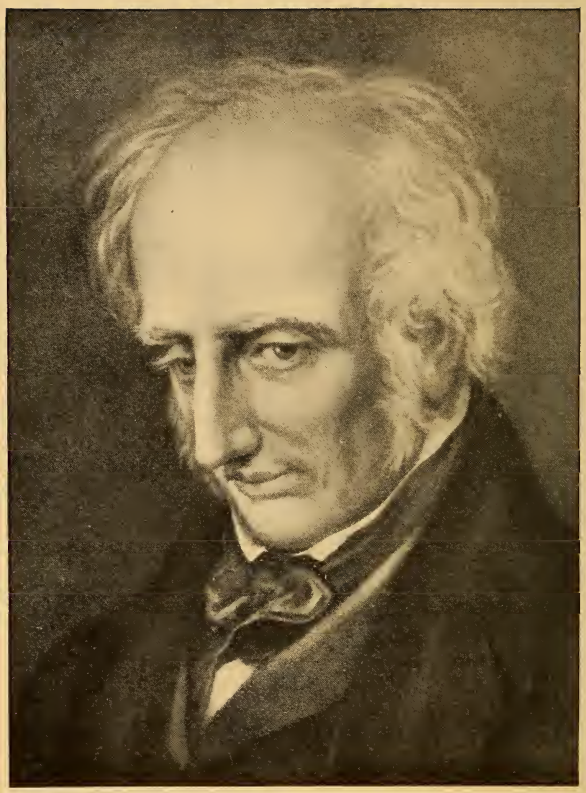
He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;[77]
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon[78] huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

XXVI.

So, when the sun in bed,[79]
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an Orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,[80]
And the yellow-skirted fays[81]
Fly after the night-steeds,[82] leaving their moon-loved maze.

XXVII.

But see! the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star[83]
Hath fixed[84] her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed[85] angels sit in order serviceable.[86]



Wm Wordsworth

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

My theme
No other than the very heart of man,
As found among the best of those who live,
Not unexalted by religious faith,
Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,
In Nature's presence; thence may I select
Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight;
And miserable love, that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.

—*Wordsworth: The Prelude.*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

(1770-1850.)

It is doubtful if any English poet, Shakespeare alone excepted, has had a deeper hold or more wholesome influence among the thoughtful part of the English-speaking race than Wordsworth. Much of his matter is of slight account, but the remainder is of the highest and most enduring value. His interpretation of God, nature, the human heart, and the elemental qualities of right living, is characterized by the insight and penetration of divinely-anointed eyes, and is expressed with the simplicity and charm of nature herself. The poet was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, April 7, 1770, and at seventeen he was entered at Cambridge University. In 1791 he graduated. In 1802 he married, and in 1813 made his home at Rydal Mount, where he died April 23, 1850. He visited the Continent five times, and made three tours of Scotland. In 1839, Oxford conferred upon him the degree of D. C. L., and in 1842 he became poet laureate.

Poems. Editions by Professor Wm. Knight and John Morley.

Life. By F. W. H. Myers.

ODE

ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY, FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

In his preface to this great "Ode," Wordsworth says: "To that dreamlike vividness and splendor which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony. . . . But having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. . . . Though the idea is not advanced in Revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it. . . . A pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations. . . . I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet."

I.

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Appareled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose;
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth,
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,[1]
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me; let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV.

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh, evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!—
But there 's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy[2] at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:[3]
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakednesss,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pygmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,

With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous[4] stage"
With all the Persons,[5] down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,[6]
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted forever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;

Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by ;[7]
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX.

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive !
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction : not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise ;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;[8]
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,

High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at emnity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X.

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

"In this poem," says Mr. A. J. George, "we have the purest and noblest manifestation of that faith in God and immortality which characterized Wordsworth as a man and a poet. It is this truth, revealed not so much to the eye of reason as to the eye of the soul, which renders the life of men and of nations divine."

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:[1]
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate,
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skillful in self-knowledge, even more pure,

As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:[2]
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made. and sees what he foresaw;

Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
'T is, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
Forever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead, unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.[3]

ODE TO DUTY.

THE central thought of this ode is voiced in the Latin quotation[1] which heads the poem in the editions of the author's works, and which may be translated as follows: "No longer good by conscious effort, but so led on to goodness by habit, that now I not only can do what is right, but am unable to do otherwise."

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial[2] sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work, and know it not:
O! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.

And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered[3] freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:[4]
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
O, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON."

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;[1]
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus[2] rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton[3] blow his wreathèd horn.

THE LOVE OF BOOKS.

THIS sonnet, "The Love of Books," and the next, "The Gain of Books," are part of a series on "Personal Talk," in which the poet describes the felicity and inspiration of happy domestic life. Wordsworth's own home life ranks among the brightest and most enviable in literary history.

WINGS have we,—and as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;[1]
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.[2]

THE GAIN OF BOOKS.

NOR can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancor, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:

And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbor, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
O! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.[1]

AFTER-THOUGHT.

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon,[1] as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall forever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

THE PLEASURES OF LIFE.

THIS sonnet bears the title, "Composed on a May Morning, 1838." "Wordworth's soul," says Mr. A. J. George, "'wedded to this goodly universe in love and holy passion,' could find no sphere from which the divine life was excluded, no sphere where joy was not 'in widest commonalty spread.'"

LIFE with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
Does joy approach? they meet the coming tide;
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and in the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied;
Or gambol—each with his shadow at his side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flowers are seen;
Why to God's goodness can not We be true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

We want the touch of Christ's hand upon our literature as it touched other dead things; we want the sense of the saturation of Christ's blood upon the souls of our poets, that it may cry through them in answer to the ceaseless wail of the sphinx of our humanity expounding agony into renovation.

—*Mrs. Browning.*

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

(1809-1861.)

ELIZABETH BARRETT was well born and tenderly reared. Constitutionally delicate, and for long periods an invalid, she gave much attention to study. At ten she was reading Homer in Greek, and at nineteen she published a book of poems which attracted attention. Nothing good in literature, classical or modern, came amiss to her. Her unwearying industry and severe application were the astonishment of her physicians. She was deeply and ardently religious, and about her deepest experiences she was as frank and open as a child. In 1846 she was married to Robert Browning, and went to live in Italy. In 1851, "Aurora Leigh" appeared, and in 1861 Mrs. Browning died in Florence. Intellectuality and spirituality are the dominant notes of her writing. She has been called the "sister of Tennyson," and "daughter of Shakespeare," nor would either be dispraised by the connection.

POEMS. In five volumes. Smith, Elder & Co.

LIFE. By J. H. Ingram.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

THE poem was published in 1844, and was suggested by terrible privations endured at that time by children in English mines and factories. It is credited with having hastened and helped the legislation restricting the employment of children of tender years.

I.

Do YE hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* can not stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west:
But the young, young children, O my brothers!
They are weeping bitterly;
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

II.

Do you question the young children in their sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow,
Which is lost in Long Ago;
The old tree is leafless in the forest;
The old year is ending in the frost;
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest;
The old hope is hardest to be lost:

But the young, young children, O my brothers!
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

III.

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see;
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak:
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary;
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children;
For the outside earth is cold,
And we young ones stand without in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

IV.

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time:
Little Alice died last year; her grave is shapen
Like a snowball in the rime.[1]
We looked into the pit prepared to take her;
Was no room for any work in the close clay:
From the sleep wherein she lieth, none will wake her,
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries.

Could we see her face, be sure we should not know
her;
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes;
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime.
It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

V.

Alas! alas! the children! They are seeking
Death in life, as best to have;
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking
With a cerement[2] from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city;
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty;
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them
through.
But they answer: "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine.

VI.

"For O!" say the children, "we are weary,
And we can not run or leap:
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them, and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping;
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;

And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow;
For all day we drag our burdens tiring,
Through the coal-dark, under-ground;
Or all day we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

VII.

"For all day the wheels are droning, turning;
Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places.
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

VIII.

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth;
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth;
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals;
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!

Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

IX.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him, and pray;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others
Will bless them another day.
They answer, "Who is God, that he should hear us
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word;
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door.
Is it likely God, with angels singing round him,
Hears our weeping any more?

X.

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember;
And at midnight's hour of harm,
'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.[3]
We know no other words except 'Our Father;'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,

And hold both within his right hand, which is
strong.
'Our Father!' If he heard us, he would surely
(For they call him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
'Come and rest with me, my child.'

XI.

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,
"He is speechless as a stone;
And they tell us, of his image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children—"up in heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us: grief has made us unbelieving:
We look up for God; but tears have made us
blind."
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by his world's loving—
And the children doubt of each.

XII.

And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom;
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm:

Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories can not reap;
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly—
Let them weep! let them weep!

XIII.

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see;
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity.
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

I.

"THERE is no God," the foolish saith,[1]
But none, "There is no sorrow;"
And Nature oft the cry of faith
In bitter need will borrow.
Eyes which the preacher could not school
By wayside graves are raisèd;

And lips say, "God be pitiful,"
Who ne'er said, "God be praisèd."
Be pitiful, O God!

II.

The tempest stretches from the steep
The shadow of its coming;
The beasts grow tame, and near us creep,
As help were in the human:
Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,
We spirits tremble under—
The hills have echoes; but we find
No answer for the thunder.
Be pitiful, O God!

III.

The battle hurtles on the plains,
Earth feels new scythes upon her;
We reap our brothers for the wains,[2]
And call the harvest—honor:
Draw face to face, front line to line,
One image all inherit,
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,
Clay—clay, and spirit—spirit.
Be pitiful, O God!

IV.

The plague runs festering through the town,
And never a bell is tolling,
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling;

The young child calleth for the cup,
The strong man brings it weeping;
The mother from her babe looks up,
And shrieks away its sleeping.
Be pitiful, O God!

V.

The plague of gold strikes far and near,
And deep and strong it enters;
This purple chimar[3] which we wear,
Makes madder than the centaur's:[4]
Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange,
We cheer the pale gold-diggers;
Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
And marked, like sheep, with figures.
Be pitiful, O God!

VI.

The curse of gold upon the land
The lack of bread enforces;
The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,
Like more of Death's white horses;
The rich preach "rights" and "future days,"
And hear no angel scoffing;
The poor die mute, with starving gaze
On corn-ships in the offing.
Be pitiful, O God!

VII.

We meet together at the feast,
To private mirth betake us;
We stare down in the wine-cup, lest
Some vacant chair should shake us;
We name delight, and pledge it round—
"It shall be ours to-morrow!"
God's seraphs, do your voices sound
As sad in naming sorrow?
Be pitiful, O God!

VIII.

We sit together, with the skies,
The steadfast skies, above us,
We look into each other's eyes,
"And how long will you love us?"
The eyes grow dim with prophecy,
The voices, low and breathless,—
"Till death us part!" O words, to be
Our *best*, for love the deathless!
Be pitiful, O God!

IX.

We tremble by the harmless bed
Of one loved and departed;
Our tears drop on the lips that said
Last night, "Be stronger-hearted!"
O God, to clasp those fingers close,
And yet to feel so lonely!
To see a light upon such brows,
Which is the daylight only!
Be pitiful, O God!

X.

The happy children come to us,
And look up in our faces;
They ask us, "Was it thus, and thus,
When we were in their places?"
We can not speak; we see anew
The hills we used to live in,
And feel our mother's smile press through
The kisses she is giving.
Be pitiful, O God!

XI.

We pray together at the kirk
For mercy, mercy solely:
Hands weary with the evil work,
We lift them to the Holy.
The corpse is calm below our knee,
Its spirit bright before Thee:
Between them, worse than either, we,
Without the rest or glory.
Be pitiful, O God!

XII.

We leave the communing of men,
The murmur of the passions,
And live alone, to live again
With endless generations:
Are we so brave? The sea and sky
In silence lift their mirrors,
And, glassed[5] therein, our spirits high
Recoil from their own terrors.
Be pitiful, O God!

XIII.

We sit on hills our childhood wist,[6]
Woods, hamlets, streams beholding:
The sun strikes through the farthest mist
The city's spire to golden:
The city's golden spire it was
When hope and health were strongest;
But now it is the churchyard grass
We look upon the longest.
Be pitiful, O God!

XIV.

And soon all vision waxeth dull,
Men whisper, "He is dying:"
We cry no more, "Be pitiful!"
We have no strength for crying—
No strength, no need. Then, soul of mine,
Look up, and triumph rather:
Lo, in the depth of God's divine
The Son adjures the Father,
BE PITIFUL, O GOD!

COWPER'S GRAVE.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800), the sweet singer of Olney, and a writer of eminent gifts, showed early a tendency to melancholy, which, at times, culminated in an utter loss of reason. He died at East Dereham, Norfolk, and it is at his grave that Mrs. Browning sees this vision of his rapture.

I.

IT is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying;
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying:
Yet let the grief and humbleness as low as silence languish:
Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

II.

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing!
O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand was clinging!
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling!

III.

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming tears his story,
How discord on the music fell, and darkness on the glory,

And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and wandering lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted,

IV.

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration;
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,
Named softly as the household name of one whom God hath taken.

V.

With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him,
With meekness that is gratefulness to God whose heaven hath won him,
Who suffered once the madness-cloud to his own love to blind him;
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him,

VI.

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic senses
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences:
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

VII.

Wild, timid hares[1] were drawn from woods to share
his home-caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tender-
nesses:
The very world, by God's constraint, from false-
hood's ways removing,
Its women and its men became, beside him, true
and loving.

VIII.

And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious
of that guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense
of providing,[2]
He testified this solemn truth, while frenzy deso-
lated,—
Nor man nor nature satisfies whom only God cre-
ated.[3]

IX.

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while
she blesses,
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness
of her kisses;
That turns his fevered eyes around—"My mother?
where 's my mother?"
As if such tender words and deeds could come from
any other!—

X.

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her
bending o'er him,
Her face all pale from watchful love,—the unweary
love she bore him!—
Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long
fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic Eyes which closed in
death to save him.

XI.

Thus? O not *thus!* no type of earth can image
that awaking
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs
round him breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body
parted,
But felt those eyes alone, and knew,—"*My* Savior!
not deserted!"

XII.

Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross
in darkness rested,
Upon the Victim's hidden face no love was mani-
fested?
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the aton-
ing drops averted?
What tears have washed them from the soul, that
one should be deserted?

XIII.

Deserted! God could separate from his own essence rather;
And Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son and Father:
Yea, once Immanuel's orphaned cry his universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"[4]

XIV.

It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,
That of the lost no son should use those words of desolation;
That earth's worst frenzies, marring hope, should mar not hope's fruition;
And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture in a vision.

WORK.

WHAT are we set on earth for? Say, to toil;
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.[1]
God did anoint thee with his odorous oil,
To wrestle, not to reign; and he assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labor, to their heart and hand,

From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand
And share its dewdrop with another near.

SUBSTITUTION.

WHEN some belovèd voice, that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
And silence, against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new,
What hope, what help, what music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh;
Not reason's subtle count; not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew;[1]
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress-trees
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws[2]
Self-chanted, nor the angels' sweet All-hails,
Met in the smile of God: nay, none of these.
Speak THOU, availing Christ! and fill this pause.

FUTURITY.

AND O belovèd voices, upon which
Ours passionately call, because erelong
Ye brake off in the middle of that song
We sang together softly, to enrich
The poor world with the sense of love, and witch[1]
The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
The hills with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche

In heaven to hold our idols; and albeit
He brake them to our faces, and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust swept from their beauty,—glorified
New Memnons[2] singing in the great God-light.

THE LOOK.

THE Savior looked on Peter.[1] Ay, no word,
No gesture of reproach: the heavens serene,
Though heavy with armed justice, did not lean
Their thunders that way: the forsaken Lord
Looked only on the traitor. None record
What that look was, none guess; for those who have seen
Wronged lovers loving through a death-pang keen,
Or pale-cheeked martyrs smiling to a sword,
Have missed Jehovah at the judgment-call.
And Peter, from the height of blasphemy,—
"I never knew this Man!"—did quail and fall
As knowing straight THAT GOD, and turnèd free
And went out speechless from the face of all,
And filled the silence, weeping bitterly.

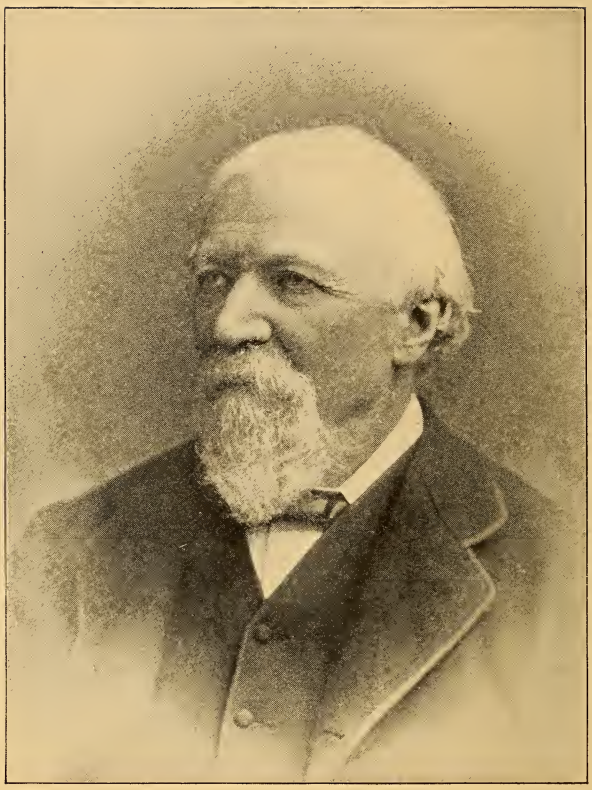
THE MEANING OF THE LOOK.

I THINK that look of Christ might seem to say:
"Thou Peter! art thou, then, a common stone[1]
Which I at last must break my heart upon,
For all God's charge to his high angels may
Guard my foot better?[2] Did I yesterday

Wash *thy* feet,[3] my beloved, that they should run
Quick to deny me 'neath the morning sun?
And do thy kisses, like the rest, betray?
The cock crows coldly. Go, and manifest
A late contrition, but no bootless fear;
For, when thy final need is dreariest,
Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here:
My voice to God and angels shall attest,
Because I KNOW *this man, let him be clear!*"

WORK AND CONTEMPLATION.

THE woman singeth at her spinning-wheel
A pleasant chant, ballad, or barcarole;[1]
She thinketh of her song, upon the whole,
Far more than of her flax; and yet the reel
Is full, and artfully her fingers feel
With quick adjustment, provident control,
The lines, too subtly twisted to unroll,
Out to a perfect thread. I hence appeal
To the dear Christian Church, that we may do
Our Father's business in these temples mirk,[2]
Thus swift and steadfast, thus intent and strong;
While thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue
Some high, calm, spheric tune, and prove our work
The better for the sweetness of our song.



Robert Browning

ROBERT BROWNING.

Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. . . .
This world 's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good;
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

—*Fra Lippo Lippi.*

ROBERT BROWNING.

(1812-1889.)

In reach of intellect, range of sympathy, and in the proper understanding of human character, Robert Browning is to be mated by Shakespeare only of all the English poets. To be a poet, and in his poetry to be the very voice of God to his generation, was Browning's earliest and last thought about his work. It is doubtful if any professional theologian of this century has divined more fully or perfectly the problems and difficulties of modern doubt, or made so large and important contributions to their rational and satisfactory solution. The Christianity of Christ has had no more powerful defense or exposition than that given by Browning in his poetry. Browning was born in Camberwell, near London, May 7, 1812; his family had some means, and the boy was trained with special reference to his vocation as a poet. His "Pauline" appeared in 1832, and attracted almost no attention; three years later "Paracelsus" appeared; but not until the series of plays and poems known as "Bells and Pomegranates" appeared (1841-1846) was his fame established. In 1846 he married Miss Barrett, and with her went to Italy to live. After her death in 1861 Mr. Browning lived in London. In 1889, during a sojourn in Italy, he died at Venice, December 12th.

Works. Best edition in seven volumes, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; also in one volume, same publishers.

Life. Robert Browning: Life and Letters, by Mrs. Sutherland Orr; also, Life of Browning, by William Sharp.

Introduction. See Introductions by Hiram Corson and William John Alexander; and Hand-Book, by Mrs. Sutherland Orr.

AN EPISTLE,

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE OF KHARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN.

KHARSHISH is an Arab physician traveling in Syria to extend his knowledge of things pertaining to his profession. Whatever he picks up likely to be of interest he communicates to his teacher at home, Abib. In his journeying he comes to Bethany, and meets the case of Lazarus, who was raised from the dead by Christ. Kharshish hears the story, and is impressed by it. When he comes to write about it, the wonder and even preposterousness of the case begin to be felt. How could he write such a story to Abib? His master would think him demented. Nevertheless, he is fascinated by it, and he records it, though not without apologies, and a tone of affected indifference, both of which, however, are swept away in the splendid utterance at the close. Having described his journey, his attendant, and some of his discoveries, Kharshish comes to the center of his theme and interest, as follows:

I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,
What set me off a-writing first of all.
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang!
For, be it this town's barrenness[1]—or else
The Man had something in the look of him,—
His case has struck me far more than 't is worth.
So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose
In the great press of novelty at hand
The care and pains this somehow stole from me)
I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,
Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have the truth?
The very man is gone from me but now,

Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.
Thus then, and let thy better wit help all!
'T is but a case of mania—subinduced
By epilepsy, at the turning-point
Of trance prolonged unduly some three days:
When, by the exhibition[2] of some drug
Or spell, exorcization, stroke of art
Unknown to me, and which 't were well to know,
The evil thing out-breaking all at once
Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,
But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide,
Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
The first conceit that entered might inscribe
Whatever it was minded on the wall
So plainly at that vantage, as it were,
(First come, first served,) that nothing subsequent
Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
The just-returned and new-established soul
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart
That henceforth she will read or these or none.
And first—the man's own firm conviction rests
That he was dead (in fact they buried him),
That he was dead and then restored to life
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe:
'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise," and he did rise.
"Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.
Not so this figment![3]—not, that such a fume,
Instead of giving way to time and health,
Should eat itself into the life of life,
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones, and all!
For see, how he takes up the after-life.

The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
The body's habit wholly laudable,
As much, indeed, beyond the common health
As he were made and put aside to show.
Think, could we penetrate by any drug
And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,
And bring it clear and fair, by three days' sleep!
Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
This grown man eyes the world now like a child.
Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
To bear my inquisition. While they spoke,
Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case,—
He listened not except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no fool.
And that's a sample how his years must go.
Look if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,[4]
Should find a treasure,—can he use the same
With straitened habits and with tastes starved small,
And take at once to his impoverished brain
The sudden element that changes things,
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand,
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?
Is he not such an one as moves to mirth—
Warily parsimonious, when no need,
Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times?
All prudent counsel as to what befits
The golden mean, is lost on such an one:
The man's fantastic will is the man's law.

So here—we call the treasure knowledge, say,
Increased beyond the fleshly faculty—
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven:
The man is witless of the size, the sum,
The value in proportion of all things,
Or whether it be little or be much.
Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
Assembled to besiege his city now,
And of the passing of a mule with gourds—
'T is one! Then take it on the other side,
Speak of some trifling fact,—he will gaze rapt
With stupor at its very littleness,
(Far as I see), as if in that indeed
He caught prodigious import, whole results;
And so will turn to us, the bystanders,
In ever the same stupor (note this point),
That we, too, see not with his opened eyes.
Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,
Preposterously, at cross purposes.
Should his child sicken unto death,—why, look
For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,
Or pretermission of the daily craft!
While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
At play, or in the school, or laid asleep,
Will startle him to an agony of fear,
Exasperation, just as like. Demand
The reason why—"'t is but a word," object—
"A gesture"[5]—he regards thee as our lord
Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
Looked at us (dost thou mind?) when, being young,

We both would unadvisedly recite
Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,
Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst
All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.
Thou and the child have[6] each a veil alike
Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye both
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match
Over a mine of Greek fire,[7] did ye know!
He holds on firmly to some thread of life—
(It is the life to lead perforcedly)
Which runs across some vast distracting orb
Of glory on either side that meager thread,
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—
The spiritual life around the earthly life:
The law of that is known to him as this,
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.
So is the man perplext with impulses
Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,
Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,
And not along, this black thread through the blaze—
"It should be" balked by "here it can not be."
And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His sage that bade him "Rise," and he did rise.
Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within
Admonishes: then back he sinks at once
To ashes, who was very fire before,
In sedulous recurrence to his trade
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;
And studiously the humbler for that pride,
Professedly the faultier that he knows

God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
Indeed the special marking of the man
Is prone submission to the heavenly will—
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last
For that same death which must restore his being
To equilibrium, body loosening soul
Divorced even now by premature full growth:
He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
So long as God please, and just how God please.
He even seeketh not to please God more
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.
Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach
The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,
Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do:
How can he give his neighbor the real ground,
His own conviction? Ardent as he is—
Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old
"Be it as God please" reassureth him.
I probed the sore as thy disciple should:
"How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
Sufficeth thee, when Rome[8] is on her march
To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"
He merely looked with his large eyes on me.
The man is apathetic, you deduce?
Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
Able and weak, affects the very brutes
And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
As a wise workman recognizes tools
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.

Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:
Only impatient, let him do his best,
At ignorance and carelessness and sin—
An indignation which is promptly curbed:
As when in certain travel I have feigned
To be an ignoramus in our art
According to some preconceived design,
And happened to hear the land's practitioners
Steep in conceit sublimed by ignorance,
Prattle fantastically on disease,
Its cause and cure—and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object,—Why have I not ere this
Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene
Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source,
Conferring with the frankness that befits?
Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech
Perished in a tumult many years ago,
Accused—our learning's fate—of wizardry,
Rebellion, to the setting up a rule
And creed prodigious, as described to me.
His death, which happened when the earthquake fell
(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss
To occult learning in our lord, the sage,
Who lived there in the pyramid alone),
Was wrought by the mad people—that 's their wont!
On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—
How could he stop the earthquake? That 's their way!
The other imputations must be lies:

But take one, though I loath to give it thee,
In mere respect for any good man's fame.
(And after all, our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?
Perhaps not: though, in writing to a leech,
'T is well to keep back nothing of a case.)
This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As—God forgive me!—who but God himself,
Creator and sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile!—
'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,
And must have so avouched himself, in fact,
In hearing of this very Lazarus,
Who saith—but why all this of what he saith?
Why write of trivial matters, things of price
Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed on the margin of a pool
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,[9]
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,
Which, now that I review it, needs must seem
Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth!
Nor I myself discern in what is writ
Good cause for the peculiar interest
And awe, indeed, this man has touched me with.
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness,

Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus:[10]
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills,
Like an old lion's cheek-teeth. Out there came
A moon made like a face with certain spots
Multiform, manifold, and menacing:
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met
In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous Syrian[11]—he may lose,
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good.
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends[12]
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine;
Till when, once more thy pardon, and farewell!

The very God![13] think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying: "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power, nor may'st conceive of mine:
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"
The madman saith He said so: it is strange.

SAUL.

THE incident upon which this poem is built is recorded in 1 Samuel xvi, 14–23. Saul, the inaugurator of the Jewish monarchy, is troubled with an evil spirit. David, the minstrel, is sent for to charm him by music, and it is David himself who describes the interview and the result. Saul is in his tent, with arms outstretched against its poles, dumb, sightless, and stark; he is in utter darkness, material as well as spiritual. David tells how he sought to move the king with songs of the field, the songs which charmed the sheep, the quail, the crickets, and jerboa; then how he passed on to the more stirring songs of social and religious life, the song of the reapers, the requiem, the marriage chorus, the battle march, and the chant of the priests. At this point Saul appears to be slightly moved as the gleam of the jewels in his turban attests. Again David sings; this time of the goodness of human life, of labor and success, and of Saul's own glory in securing recognition as the head of a great nation. This still further arouses Saul. Then David, striking a higher key, carries the events of this life into the life beyond, and the glory of Saul's generation to succeeding generations, and Saul becomes himself again. The tenderness of David's love for the suffering king leads him still further; he yearns to give him a new life now, which will be everlasting; his desire becomes a prophecy, and his prophecy a vision of Christ, who shall throw open to Saul the gates of that new life. His ministry ended, David seeks his own home, attended, as he declares, by cohorts on every hand. A Hand guides him in the tumult of expectation with which earth is thrilling; the rapture of his ecstasy subsides, and day dawns upon an order of things which this vision of Christ has transfigured.

Our selection begins where David seeks to move Saul by a song of the immortality of endeavor, and the beatitude of mere living.

XI.

What spell or what charm,
(For, awhile there was trouble within me), what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him?—Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not: he lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII.

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep
Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled slow, as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky:
And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,

Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for." And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus—

XIII.

"Yea, my King,"
I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these too, in turn
Broke abloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect: yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight

Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed,[1] than at first when, inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit: thou diest at last:

As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man—so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid arise,
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers: whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid,—
For not half, they 'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's awave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave:

So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art!"

XIV.

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who didst grant me, that day,[2]
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure,—my shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word,—
Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me—till, mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice to my heart[3]
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves

The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV.

I say then,—my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and, ever more strong,
Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes
Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets[4] of price, with the clasp set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there a while,

And sat out my singing,—one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak-roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine—
And O, all my heart how it loved him![5] but where was the sign?
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;

I would give thee new life altogether, as good ages hence
As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI.

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! outbroke—

XVII.

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:[6]
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw:
I report, as a man may of God's work—all 's love, yet all 's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dew-drop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest to image success?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more and no less,

In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There 's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance, (I laugh as I think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain for love's sake.
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,

Nine and ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appall?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here the parts shift?
Here the creature surpass the creator,—the end, what began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvelous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life's dayspring, death's minute of night?

Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;
By the pain throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

XVIII.

"I believe it! 'T is thou, God, that givest, 't is I who receive;
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loth

To look that, even that in the face too? Why is
it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance?[7] What
stops my despair?
This;—'t is not what man Does which exalts him,
but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him, but can not, the
wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow
poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—
knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. O, speak through
me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst
thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, utter-
most crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up
nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no
breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins is-
sue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be
proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being
Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest
shall stand the most weak.

'T is the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

XIX.

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as struggglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed

All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he felt the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the vine-bowers:
And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—"E'en so, it is so!"

RABBI BEN EZRA.

THIS poem is a review of life from the standpoint of matured experience. Rabbi Ben Ezra was a Jewish scholar, who attained ripe old age (1092–1187), and the meditation here ascribed to him would come with best grace and force from him in his later years. The thought is simple. The art of living has been learned only by that man who makes the perfection of character the great end of life. Such a life continues to grow better endlessly. To this end God has given us his creation,—our bodies, the worlds about us, all loveliness, all good, all enjoyment. Only when we make any of these an end instead of an instrument do we miss God's purpose and fail of life's true idea. God is the potter, we the clay, and the changes of life the wheel with which God shapes us to the highest beauty of character. Life and its changes may disappear, but God and the human soul endure forever.

I.

GROW old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

II.

Not that,[1] amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

III.

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt[2]
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care[3] the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V.

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold[4] of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.

VI.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

VII.

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

VIII.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?[5]
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?[6]

IX.

Yet gifts should prove their use:[7]
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once, "How good to live and learn?"

X.

Not once beat, "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design;
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou shalt do!

XI.

"For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!"

XII.

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh, to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

XIII.

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved[8]
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God, though in the germ.

XIV.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:

Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.[9]

XV.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire-ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.[10]

XVI.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest;
Take it, and try its worth: here dies another day."

XVII.

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last:
"This rage was right i' the main;
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

XVIII.

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:

Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

XIX.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death, nor be afraid!

XX.

Enough now,[11] if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

XXI.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,[12]
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

XXII.

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise:
They, this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul
believe?

XXIII.

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,[13]
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a
trice:

XXIV.

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's
amount:

XXV.

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;

All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

XXVI.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,[14]
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

XXVII.

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII.

He fixed thee, mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee, and turn thee forth sufficiently impressed.

XXIX.

What though the earlier grooves[15]
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

XXX.

Look not thou down, but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal-board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's[16] foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou
with earth's wheel?

XXXI.

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life,
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

XXXII.

So, take and use thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the
aim!

My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE poem relates a succession of experiences by which the poet finds himself instructed as to the divine nature of Christ, and the character of the worship God most desires.

FIRST EXPERIENCE.—Finding himself in the vicinity of a small Dissenting chapel, on a stormy Christmas eve, the poet seeks shelter in the building, where, from the ardent worshipers, he receives but scanty welcome. As the close of the poem indicates surprise at finding himself "bolt upright on my bench, as if I had never left it," we may imagine the succeeding action of the poem to have taken place in a dream or vision. The room, the congregation, the preacher, the service, are all alike distasteful to him, and he flings himself out of the chapel into the storm. The largeness and freshness of nature are an inspiration; the heavens have a message for him; they speak of God's power, and of power directed by love:

IN youth I looked to these very skies,
And, probing their immensities,
I found God there, his visible power;
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense
Of the power, an equal evidence
That his love, there too, was the nobler dower.
For the loving worm within its clod
Were diviner than a loveless God
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.

God had made man: power and love are the attributes of man; and power expressing itself in love is the only ade-

quate idea of the Infinite. This revelation assures him that that love in man which responds to God's love towards man is not to be ended or quenched by death:

No: love which, on earth, amid all the shows of it,
Has ever been seen the sole good of life in it,
The love, ever growing there, spite of the strife in it,
Shall arise, made perfect, from death's repose of it!
And I shall behold thee, face to face,
O God, and in thy light retrace
How in all I loved here, still wast thou!
Whom, pressing to, then, as I fain would now,
I shall find as able to satiate
The love, thy gift, as my spirit's wonder
Thou art able to quicken and sublimate,
With this sky of thine, that I now walk under,
And glory in thee for, as I gaze
Thus, thus! O, let men keep their ways
Of seeking thee in a narrow shrine—
Be this my way! And this is mine!

While in this exalted frame of mind, a natural wonder is displayed—a lunar rainbow—

A glorious thing, that, dauntless, deathless,
. . . vast and perfect,
From heaven to heaven extending, perfect
As the mother-moon's self, full in face.

From the summit of this came an apparition in human form, with back turned upon the dreamer:

I saw the back of Him, no more—
. . . . . .
No face: only the sight

Of a sweepy garment vast and white
With a hem that I could recognize.

Something in the manner of this apparition suggested to the dreamer that offense had been taken at the latter's harsh judgment upon the chapel service which both had left together. To clear himself, the dreamer pleads that his heart was right even if his temper were wrong, and that his only thought was for a more perfect communion with Infinite Love than the chapel afforded.

I thought it best that thou, the spirit,
Be worshiped in spirit and in truth,
And in beauty, as even we require it—
Not in the forms burlesque, uncouth
I left but now as scarcely fitted
For thee.

And even, he adds, if such a thought were wrong:

What is it to thee, who curest sinning?
Am I not weak as thou art strong?
I have looked to thee from the beginning,
. . . . . .
And since the time thou wast descried
Spite of the weak heart, so have I
Lived ever, and so fain would die,
Living and dying, Thee before!

The plea avails. The apparition turns full face upon the dreamer, and the beauty of forgiveness is exhibited under the following striking figure:

And I spread myself beneath it,
As when the bleacher spreads, to seethe it

In the cleansing sun, his wool,—
Steeps in the flood of noontide whiteness
Some defiled, discolored web—
So lay I, saturate with brightness.

This, then, is the first lesson of Christmas eve. These poor dissenting worshipers are friends of the Divine Being they worship, and it is an offense to him for any one to despise these "little ones" of his.

God who registers the cup
Of mere cold water for his sake
To a disciple rendered up,
Disdains not his own thirst to slake
At the poorest love was ever offered:
And because my heart I proffered,
With true love trembling at the brim,
He suffers me to follow Him
Forever, my own way.

Second Experience.—The dream is now transferred to a scene of worship vastly different from that which he has just witnessed in the poor chapel of the Dissenters. The Spirit conveys him to Rome, and brings him to the door of the mighty basilica of St. Peter's. Though standing without, the dreamer's eyes pierce the crust of the outer wall, and look upon a scene of unwonted splendor. At the sound of a bell the great multitude prostrate themselves, and the sacrifice of the mass is performed in the profoundest silence. Then

Earth breaks up, time drops away,
In flows heaven with its new day
Of endless life, when He who trod,
Very man and very God,

This earth in weakness, shame, and pain,
Dying the death whose signs remain
Up yonder on the accursèd tree,—
Shall come again, no more to be
Of captivity the thrall,
But the one God, All in all,
King of kings, Lord of lords,
As His servant John received the words,
"I died, and live for evermore!"

The dreamer is without. He is no sympathizer with Rome; and yet Rome must have possession of some truth, else why had the Spirit entered to participate in the service? Did not he, the dreamer, owe it to himself to enter also, and join them in their service of praise? For, though much of the old pagan spirit remained, the influence of the new Love brought in by Christ had served to purify and elevate it; and wherever love was, there was the virtue which made worship acceptable to God.

THIRD EXPERIENCE.—Again the dreamer is caught up by the Spirit, and this time he is conveyed to Göttingen, in Germany, where he hears a university professor lecture on the Christ-Myth. The conclusion reached in the dissertation is, that Christ was simply

A Man!—a right true man, however,
Whose work was worthy a man's endeavor;
Work, that gave warrant almost sufficient
To his disciples, for rather believing
He was just omnipotent and omniscient,
As it gives to us, for as frankly receiving
His word, their tradition,—which, though it mean
Something entirely different

From all that those who only heard it,
In their simplicity thought and averred it,
Had yet a meaning quite as respectable:

Since, among other things, did it not teach "the natural sovereignty of our race?" Into this room the Spirit did not invite the dreamer to enter; for, though

> Truth's atmosphere may grow mephitic
> When Papist struggles with Dissenter,
> . . . . . .
> —the Critic leaves no air to poison;
> Pumps out with ruthless ingenuity
> Atom by atom, and leaves you—vacuity.

The dreamer then reviews the Critic's position. The Critic accepts Christ, but not as divine. What, then, remains? Can Christ claim pre-eminence on the score of Intellect? Other teachers have been great intellectually; but none before or after ever made the "important stumble" of claiming to be one with God. His goodness, then?

> Strange goodness, which upon the score
> Of being goodness, the mere due
> Of man to fellow-man, much more
> To God—should take another view
> Of its possessor's privilege,
> And bid him rule his race!

Moreover, what was the source of Christ's goodness? Was it self-gained, or did God inspire it? If the outcome of moral genius, then we might praise him as a discoverer like Harvey, or a poet like Shakespeare; but we should not worship him nor recognize him as absolute and final authority on conduct. If his goodness were the gift of God, then we must look beyond the gift to the Giver. So that in

neither case does simple goodness make Christ a ruler over men. Nor does Christ himself lay stress on this phase of his character. His precept does not run, "Believe in good, in justice, truth, now understood for the first time;" but, "Believe in me, who lived and died, yet essentially am Lord of Life." The Critic is, moreover, a trifle inconsistent; for, having ground the pearl of Christ's divinity to ashes, he does not bid his hearers sweep the dust away, but insists upon their taking back that faith "if it be not just whole, yet a pearl indeed." "Go home," he says:

> "Go home and venerate the Myth
> I thus have experimented with—
> This Man, continue to adore Him
> Rather than all who went before Him,
> And all who ever followed after!"

Meanwhile the Spirit has been in the class-room. Does this, the dreamer asks, signify that even here there is an element of sincere worship? If so, then does it make much matter what form of worship we adopt? Is not a genial indifference to any form the most admirable temper? Holding

> A value for religion's self,
> A carelessness about the sects of it.

FOURTH (?) EXPERIENCE.—The rebuke of the Spirit is instant and terrible. The storm and the darkness seize the dreamer, and fling him prone on the college door-step, and the Spirit's garment, which has been his guide, solace, and strength in all these journeyings, he sees withdrawing itself. Fear makes him quick of apprehension; God has no tolerance for indifference of any sort. There is a chief best way of worship, and that way must be found; to find it is the highest end of man's earthly endeavor.

Needs must there be one way, our chief
Best way of worship: let me strive
To find it, and when found, contrive
My fellows also take their share!
This constitutes my earthly care:
God's is above it and distinct,
For I, a man, with men am linked,
And not a brute with brutes; no gain
That I experience, must remain
Unshared: but should my best endeavor
To share it, fail—subsisteth ever
God's care above, and I exult
That God, by God's own ways occult,
May—doth, I will believe—bring back
All wanderers to a single track.
Meantime, I can but testify
God's care for me—no more, can I—
It is but for myself I know.

FIFTH EXPERIENCE.—Upon reaching this better frame of mind, the dreamer is again permitted to catch at the flying robe of the Spirit.

And unrepelled
Was lapped again in its folds full-fraught
With warmth and wonder and delight,
God's mercy being infinite.

Again he is in the chapel of the Dissenters, and there he awakes. The preacher has reached his tenth and lastly. He violates in his preaching every known canon of good taste; but he is God's prophet, and in the presence of that fact there is no room for criticism. The water of life may be dispensed in a shabby earthen cup, and bear the taint of the

earth through which it comes; but it is the water of life nevertheless. And

Better have knelt at the poorest stream
That trickles in pain from the straitest rift!
For the less or the more is all God's gift,
Who blocks up or breaks wide the granite-seam.
And here, is there water or not, to drink?
I then, in ignorance and weakness,
Taking God's help, have attained to think
My heart does best to receive in meekness
That mode of worship, as most to his mind,
Where earthly aids being cast behind,
His All in All appears serene
With the thinnest human veil between,
Letting the mystic lamps, the seven,
The many motions of his spirit,
Pass, as they list, to earth from heaven.
For the preacher's merit or demerit,
It were to be wished the flaws were fewer
In the earthen vessel, holding treasure
Which lies as safe in a golden ewer;
But the main thing is, does it hold good measure?
Heaven soon sets right all other matters!—
Ask, else, these ruins of humanity,
This flesh worn out to rags and tatters,
This soul at struggle with insanity,
Who thence take comfort—can I doubt?—
Which an empire gained, were a loss without.
May it be mine! And let us hope
That no worse blessing befall the Pope,

. . . . . .

Nor may the Professor forego its peace
At Göttingen presently, when, in the dusk
Of his life, ...
. . . Thicker and thicker the darkness fills
The world through his misty spectacles,
And he gropes for something more substantial
Than a fable, myth or personification,—
May Christ do for him what no mere man shall,
And stand confessed as the God of salvation!

EASTER-DAY.

EASTER-DAY is an apotheosis of endeavor. The difficulties and discouragements of the Christian life, whether as related to matters of faith or to matters of desire, are recognized and conceded; but to the poet this ideal of life, though man stumble at every step in the way of its achievement, is the only thing worth living for. God has created man for himself; and the man who, in preference to God, fixes his heart upon the world, or upon art, or upon knowledge, or even upon love, has just dwarfed his nature to that extent. He has contented himself with the less when he might have had the greater, and set his love upon the part when he might have had the whole. This truth is borne into the poet in a vision of judgment.

I FOUND

Suddenly all the midnight round
One fire. The dome of heaven had stood
As made up of a multitude
Of handbreadth cloudlets, one vast rack
Of ripples infinite and black,
From sky to sky. Sudden there went,
Like horror and astonishment,

A fierce vindictive scribble of red
Quick flame across, as if one said
(The angry scribe of Judgment), "There—
Burn it!" . . .
I felt begin
The Judgment-Day. . . .
There, stood I, found and fixed, I knew,
Choosing the world.

In the presence of this crisis, the poet's heart is brave, and his brain clear. He proposes, not simply to defend, but to applaud his choice, which he does in a remarkable analysis of the religio-worldly spirit:

I resolved to say:
"So was I framed by Thee, such way
I put to use Thy senses here!
It was so beautiful, so near,
Thy world,—what could I then but choose
My part there? Nor did I refuse
To look above the transient boon
Of time; but it was hard so soon,
As in a short life, to give up
Such beauty: I could put the cup,
Undrained of half its fullness, by;
But to renounce it utterly—
That was too hard! Nor did the cry
Which bade renounce it, touch my brain
Authentically deep and plain
Enough to make my lips let go.
But Thou, who knowest all, dost know
Whether I was not, life's brief while,
Endeavoring to reconcile

Those lips (too tardily, alas!)
To letting the dear remnant pass,
One day,—some drops of earthly good
Untasted! Is it for this mood,
That Thou, whose earth delights so well,
Hast made its complement a hell?"

To this the answer is a final belch of fire, and a Voice, which says:

"Life is done,
Time ends, Eternity 's begun,
And thou art judged for evermore."

Then comes the vision of God, and the Divine pronouncement:

"All is come to pass.
Such shows are over for each soul
They had respect to. In the roll
Of Judgment which convinced mankind
Of sin, stood many, bold and blind,
Terror must burn the truth into:
Their fate for them!—thou hadst to do
With absolute Omnipotence,
Able its judgments to dispense
To the whole race, as every one
Were its sole object. Judgment done,
God is, thou art,—the rest is hurled
To nothingness for thee. This world,
This finite life, thou hast preferred,
In disbelief of God's plain word,
To heaven and to infinity.
Here the probation was for thee,

To show thy soul the earthly mixed
With heavenly, it must choose betwixt.
The earthly joys lay palpable,—
A taint in each, distinct as well;
The heavenly flitted, faint and rare,
Above them, but as truly were
Taintless, so, in their nature, best.
Thy choice was earth: thou didst attest
'T was fitter spirit should subserve
The flesh, than flesh refine to nerve
Beneath the spirit's play.

. . . . . .

Thou art shut
Out of the heaven of spirit; glut
Thy sense upon the world: 't is thine
Forever—take it!"

At this the poet, in a transport, exclaims:

"How? Is mine?
The world? . . . Hast thou spoke
Plainly in that? Earth's exquisite
Treasures of wonder and delight
For me?"

To which God replies:

"So soon made happy? Hadst thou learned
What God accounteth happiness,
Thou wouldst not find it hard to guess
What hell may be His punishment
For those who doubt if God invent

Better than they. Let such men rest
Content with what they judged the best.
. . . . . .
And thou, whose heaven self-ordained
Was, to enjoy earth unrestrained,
Do it! Take all the ancient show!
. . . . . .
Expend
Eternity upon its shows,
Flung thee as freely as one rose
Out of a summer's opulence,
Over the Eden-barrier whence
Thou art excluded. Knock in vain!"

Then the poet recounts to himself the vast, exhaustless beauty and the endless change of wonder which the earth affords, and while he is gloating over the prospective enjoyment of it all, God speaks again:

"Welcome so to rate
The arras-folds that variegate
The earth, God's antechamber, well!
The wise, who waited there, could tell
By these, what royalties in store
Lay one step past the entrance-door.
. . . . . .
All partial beauty was a pledge
Of beauty in its plenitude:
But since the pledge sufficed thy mood,
Retain it! plenitude be theirs
Who looked above!"

This suggests to the poet that perhaps, after all, earth is not so sufficing as he imagines. He heretofore turns to

art—the statuary of Greece, Italy's paintings. But here the artist, who shrinks from being judged even by his best work, or by that which men most approve, is himself witness to the inadequacy of his best efforts to express ideal beauty. If this is the feeling of the artist living, what must be his view when freed from earth's limitations:

> Think, now,
> What pomp in Buonarroti's brow,
> With its new palace-brain where dwells
> Superb the soul, unvexed by cells
> That crumbled with the transient clay!
> What visions will his right hand's sway
> Still turn to forms, as still they burst
> Upon him? How will he quench thirst,
> Titanically infantine,
> Laid at the breast of the Divine?

Beauty in nature and art is a means of spiritual education, not the end of spiritual achievement. God pronounced his creation "very good" for its purpose, which was to prepare man for something better.

> So, in God's eye, the earth's first stuff
> Was, neither more nor less, enough
> To house man's soul, man's need fulfill.

And those who have made the best use of the world have not been unwilling to leave it, since it has but cultivated them to a desire for something more than it can itself furnish.

Very well, says the poet, if Nature and Art are inadequate, then remains knowledge. "Mind is best, I will seize the mind, forego the rest." But, answers God, the highest reaches of mind are but gleams of heaven meant to sting

the soul with hunger for full light. Only one thing more remains, says the poet, and that is Love,—"I pray for love, then, only!" Then the Voice reminds him how late this choice comes; how blind he has been to all the manifestations of love in the universe, and how, chiefly, he has turned away in unbelief from Christ, the fullest manifestation of love. Conscious now, that whatever his choosing, if left to natural tastes and impulses, he should by no means better his condition, but only make it worse, the poet now craves to be placed again in the old human relation where, even if limited and hindered, he is fulfilling God's assignment, and thus is in the way to the proper achievement of his destiny. The noble passages embodying this thought we subjoin in full:

Then I—"Behold, my spirit bleeds,
Catches no more at broken reeds,—
But lilies flower those reeds above:
I let the world go, and take love!
Love survives in me, albeit those
I love be henceforth masks and shows,
Not living men and women: still
I mind how love repaired all ill,
Cured wrong, soothed grief, made earth amends
With parents, brothers, children, friends!

Some semblance of a woman yet
With eyes to help me to forget,
Shall look on me; and I will match
Departed love with love, attach
Old memories to new dreams, nor scorn
The poorest of the grains of corn
I save from shipwreck on this isle,

Trusting its barrenness may smile
With happy foodful green one day,
More precious for the pains. I pray,—
Leave to love, only!"

At the word,
The Form, I looked to have been stirred
With pity and approval, rose
O'er me, as when the headsman throws
Ax over shoulder to make end—
I fell prone, letting him expend
His wrath, while thus the inflicting Voice
Smote me: "Is this thy final choice?
Love is the best? 'T is somewhat late!
And all thou dost enumerate
Of power and beauty in the world,
The mightiness of love was curled
Inextricably round about.
Love lay within it and without,
To clasp thee,—but in vain! Thy soul
Still shrunk from him who made the whole,
Still set deliberate aside
His love!—Now take love! Well betide
Thy tardy conscience! Haste to take
The show of love for the name's sake,
Remembering every moment who,
Beside creating thee unto
These ends, and these for thee, was said
To undergo death in thy stead
In flesh like thine: so ran the tale.
What doubt in thee could countervail

Belief in it? Upon the ground
'That in the story had been found
Too much love! How could God love so?'
He who in all his works below
Adapted to the needs of man,
Made love the basis of the plan,—
Did love, as was demonstrated:
While man, who was so fit instead
To hate, as every day gave proof,—
Man thought man, for his kind's behoof,
Both could and did invent that scheme
Of perfect love: 'T would well beseem
Cain's nature thou wast wont to praise,
Not tally with God's usual ways!"

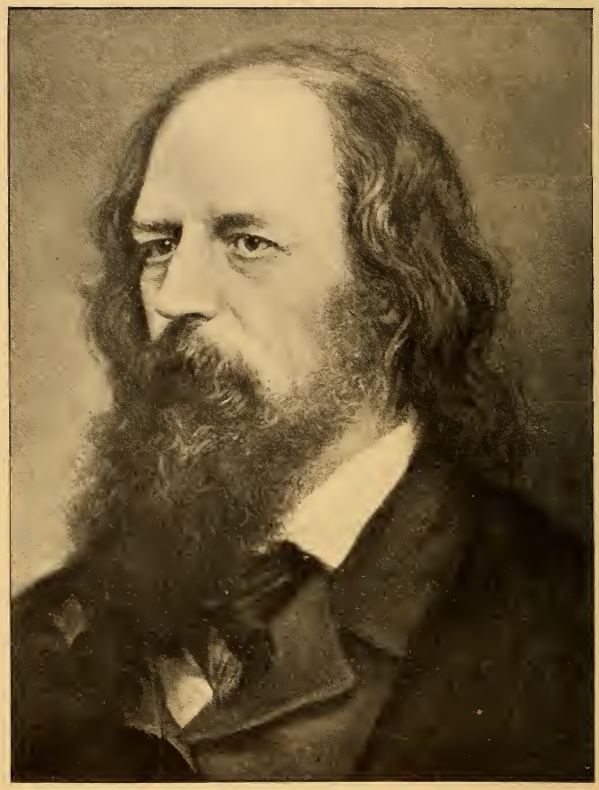
And I cowered deprecatingly—
"Thou Love of God! Or let me die,
Or grant what shall seem heaven almost!
Let me not know that all is lost,
Though lost it be—leave me not tied
To this despair, this corpse-like bride!
Let that old life seem mine—no more—
With limitation as before,
With darkness, hunger, toil, distress:
Be all the earth a wilderness!
Only let me go on, go on,
Still hoping ever and anon
To reach one eve the Better Land!"

Then did the Form expand, expand—
I knew him through the dread disguise

As the whole God within his eyes
Embraced me.
When I lived again,
The day was breaking,—the gray plain
I rose from, silvered thick with dew.
Was this a vision? False or true?
Since then, three varied years are spent,
And commonly my mind is bent
To think it was a dream—be sure
A mere dream and distemperature—
The last day's watching: then the night,—
The shock of that strange Northern Light
Set my head swimming, bred in me
A dream. And so I live, you see,
Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
Prefer, still struggling to effect
My warfare; happy that I can
Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
Not left in God's contempt apart,
With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.
Thank God, she still each method tries
To catch me, who may yet escape,
She knows,—the fiend in angel's shape!
Thank God, no paradise stands barred
To entry, and I find it hard
To be a Christian, as I said!
Still every now and then my head
Raised glad, sinks mournful—all grows drear
Spite of the sunshine, while I fear
And think, "How dreadful to be grudged

No ease henceforth, as one that 's judged,
Condemned to earth forever, shut
From heaven !"

But Easter-Day breaks ! But
Christ rises ! Mercy every way
Is infinite,—and who can say ?



A. Tennyson

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he loved beyond the grave.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the
Pure, the Just,
Take the charm "For ever" from them, and they crumble into
dust.

—*Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.*

ALFRED TENNYSON.

(1809-1892.)

TENNYSON, as a child of five, began his career as a poet in the cry which broke from him as the wind hurried him down the garden-walk:

"I hear a Voice that 's speaking in the wind."

Upon reading some verses produced in the lad's twelfth year, his father said, "If that boy dies, one of our greatest poets shall have gone." Tennyson's father was a clergyman in the village of Somersby, in Lincolnshire, where the poet was born, August 6, 1809. In 1826, with his brother Charles, he published his first serious attempts in versification. In 1828 he matriculated at Cambridge University, and formed the friendship with Arthur Hallam, whose death, in 1833, was immortalized in "In Memoriam." In 1842 appeared the collection of poems (in two volumes) which gave him rank as first of the younger poets. In 1845 he was placed on the civil pension list; and in 1850 appeared the "In Memoriam." This latter year also witnessed the poet's marriage, and his appointment as poet laureate. In 1884 he accepted a peerage, and was gazetted Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. October 6, 1892, he died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. No other poet has ever commanded so much variety of verse, or achieved such perfection of form. The spirit throughout is lofty, hopeful, and inspiring to the last degree; and no prophet, of any generation, has urged more persuasively the claims of righteousness in thought and deed.

POEMS. Macmillan edition, in one volume.

LIFE. By Arthur Waugh.

IN MEMORIAM.

THIS famous poem is really a series of lyrics, in which are blended personal sorrow for the loss of a friend and reflections upon the greater problems of life which death suggests to every thoughtful mind. It was written to commemorate the death of Arthur Henry Hallam, son of the historian, and close friend of the poet's. Hallam died in Vienna, in 1833. The poem was published originally in 1850; two sections were subsequently added—lix in 1851, and xxxix in 1869. It opens with the following

INVOCATION.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we can not prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo! thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.[1]

Thou seemest human and divine;
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we can not know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light!

THE GAIN OF LOSS.[2]

I.

I HELD it truth, with him[3] who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves[4] to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years,
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief, lest both be drowned,
  Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
  Ah! sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,[5]

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
  The long result of love, and boast:
  "Behold the man that loved and lost!
But all he was is overworn."[6]

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship!
  O Priestess in the vaults of Death!
  O sweet and bitter in a breath!
What whispers from thy lying lip?[7]

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
  A web is wov'n across the sky;
  From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
  With all the music in her tone,
  A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
  Embrace her as my natural good?
  Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.[8]

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most,—
'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all.[9]

LOVE'S REASONING.

XXXI.[10]

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded—if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.[11]

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer;
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits;
And He that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Savior's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is their blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
  Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
  Whose faith has center everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
  Her early Heaven, her happy views;
  Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
  Her hands are quicker unto good:
  O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
  In holding by the law within,
  Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.[12]

XXXVI.

Though truths in manhood darkly join,
  Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
  We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;[13]

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
  Where truth in closest words[14] shall fail,
  When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.[15]

THE IMPERISHABILITY OF VIRTUOUS ENDEAVOR.

LII.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:[16]

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dashed with flecks of sin,
Abide: thy wealth is gathered in,
When Time hath sundered shell from pearl."

LIV.

O yet we trust[17] that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole[18]
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs[19]
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, "A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law—
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine,[20] shrieked against his creed—

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice[21] to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.[22]

LOVE'S REMEMBRANCE.

LXIV.[23]

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,[24]
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mold a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The center of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He played at counselors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who plows with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands;
"Does my old friend remember me?"

CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this,[25]
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothèd wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

LXVIII.[26]

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad, I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

A ROYAL PILGRIM.[27]

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crowned with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;[28]
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honored guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As linked with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?[29]

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk[30]
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw through all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassioned logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touched with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Through all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;[31]

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have looked on: if they looked in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe[32] and riper years:
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarmed of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, through all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.[33]

XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead!

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

TO CONQUER DOUBT.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted,[34] you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew[35]
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the specters of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinaï's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,[36]
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

THE REIGN OF CHRIST.[37]

CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly-dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM.[38]

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.[39]

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She can not fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons, fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power? Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly, of the mind;
But Wisdom heavenly, of the soul.
O, friend,[40] who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity!

CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts,[41] I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,[42]
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
    Hereafter, up from childhood shape
    His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

THE GLORY OF TRUE MANHOOD.[43]

CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
    The giant laboring in his youth;
    Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
    Are breathers of an ampler day
    For ever-nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread,

In tracts of fluent heat began,
    And grew to seeming-random forms,
    The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime to clime,
    The herald of a higher race,
    And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
    Or, crowned with attributes of woe
    Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

GOD REVEALED TO FAITH.[44]

CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor through the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, "Believe no more,"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach through nature, molding men.

GOD REIGNS.[45]

CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, though as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well,

CXXVII.

And all is well, though faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n though thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine[46]
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags:
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compassed by the fires of Hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And thronèd races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

THE PALACE OF ART.

A MAN of ample means, and highly endowed, sets before himself one object in life—to be happy. To this end he selects a secluded site, builds himself a "Palace of Art," surrounds himself with everything that appeals to the most cultivated taste and refined sense of luxury, and then shuts rigorously out all interests of his fellow-men, that nothing may clash with his enjoyment. Of course, his scheme fails. No man liveth to himself, and love is the final requirement for happiness. His lesson is bitter, but wholesome, and he is taught that being human, he must find and claim kinship with all that is human to reach the goal of a happy life.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass
I chose. The rangèd ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."[1]

To which my soul made answer readily:
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide."

. . . . . .

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras[2] green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathèd bugle-horn.

One seemed all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One showed an iron coast and angry waves.
You seemed to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain;
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.[3]

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
Not less than truth designed.

. . . . . .

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;[4]
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely planned
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,[5]
Toiled onward, pricked with goads and stings;
Here played, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she[6] trod: and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne:
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost Oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-browed Verulam,[7]
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazoned fair
In diverse raiment strange:

Through which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flushed in her temples, and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,[8] drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echoed song
Throb through the ribbèd stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: "All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'T is one to me." She—when young night divine
Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollowed moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried:
"I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich and wide,
Be flattered to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep."[9]

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God, holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flashed through her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prospered: so three years
She prospered: on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod,[10] when the shout was in his ears,
Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turned her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene,"[11] and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength," she said,
"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dimfretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite,
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Joined not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance[12]
Rolled round by one fixed law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.
"No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,
"No voice breaks through the stillness of this world:
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, moldering with the dull earth's moldering sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seemed to hear the dully[13] sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveler, walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howled aloud: "I am on fire within!
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finishèd,
She threw her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others[14] there
When I have purged my guilt."

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THE subjoined selection from the "Idylls of the King," contains the "Temptation of Sir Bedivere" and "The Passing of Arthur," two instructive episodes done into marvelous verse. The story is briefly this: The Round Table, which may be taken to represent an ideal society, has been broken up by sin. Divided among themselves, an attempt has been made by his knights to dethrone Arthur, who, in the battle following, receives his death-wound. Knowing that the end has come, Arthur asks to be taken to the margin of a lake which is near, and thither he is borne by Sir Bedivere. The king, handing Sir Bedivere his sword Excalibur, commands him to throw it into the lake, and report the result. Sir Bedivere, noting the value and beauty of the weapon, covets it, and seeks to hide it. The king perceives his duplicity, and threatens him; then Sir Bedivere obeys. The result is communicated to the king, who prepares himself for the journey, and who, escorted by three queens, passes from sight to "where, beyond these voices, there is peace." The lessons of obedience in the case of Sir Bedivere, and of submission in the case of the king, are enforced in passages of memorable beauty.

THERE drew he[1] forth the brand[2] Excalibur,[3]
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed

There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,[4]
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief[5] and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly[6] bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,[7]
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,

Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for[8] a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing[9] round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,[10]
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite,[11] mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves[12]
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware[13]
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled,[14] black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses[15] dashed with drops
Of onset: and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne—were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?

Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders[16] with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;[17]
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

THIS poem is based upon a story published in a magazine, and the two girls are drawn from actual life. It should be noted that it is the hospital nurse who speaks throughout.

EMMIE.

I.

OUR doctor had called in another, I never had seen
him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him
come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of
other lands—
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless
hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but they said
too of him
He was happier using the knife than in trying to
save the limb,

And that I can well believe, for he looked so coarse
and so red,
I could think he was one of those who would break
their jests on the dead,
And mangle the living dog that had loved him and
fawned at his knee—
Drenched with the hellish oorali[1]—that ever such
things should be!

II.

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of our chil-
dren would die
But for the voice of Love, and the smile, and the
comforting eye—
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seemed out
of its place—
Caught in a mill and crushed—it was all but a hope-
less case:
And he handled him gently enough; but his voice
and his face were not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it and
made up his mind,
And he said to me roughly, "The lad will need lit-
tle more of your care."
"All the more need," I told him, "to seek the Lord
Jesus in prayer;
They are all his children here, and I pray for them
all as my own:"
But he turned to me, "Ay, good woman, can prayer
set a broken bone?"

Then he muttered half to himself, but I know that
I heard him say,
"All very well—but the good Lord Jesus has had
his day."

III.

Had? has it come? It has only dawned. It will
come by and by..
O how could I serve in the wards if the hope of the
world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the loath-
some smells of disease
But that He said, "Ye do it to me, when ye do it
to these?"

IV.

So he went. And we past to this ward where the
younger children are laid:
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our meek
little maid;
Empty you see just now! We have lost her who
loved her so much—
Patient of pain though as quick as a sensitive plant
to the touch;
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved me
to tears,
Hers was the gratefulest heart I have found in a
child of her years—
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used to send
her the flowers;
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to
'em hours after hours!

They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are revealed
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field;
Flowers to these "spirits in prison" are all they can know of the spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft of an Angel's wing;
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her thin hands crost on her breast—
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor said, "Poor little dear!
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she 'll never live through it, I fear."

V.

I walked with our kindly old doctor as far as the head of the stair,
Then I returned to the ward; the child did n't see I was there.

VI.

Never since I was nurse, had I been so grieved and so vext!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she called from her cot to the next,
"He says I shall never live through it; O Annie, what shall I do?"
Annie considered. "If I," said the wise little Annie, "was you,

I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me; for, Emmie, you see,
It 's all in the picture there—'Little children should come to me.' "
(Meaning the print that you gave us, I find that it always can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children about his knees.)
"Yes, and I will," said Emmie; "but then if I call to the Lord,
How should he know that it 's me? such a lot of beds in the ward!"
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she considered, and said:
"Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em outside on the bed—
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but, Emmie, you tell it him plain,
It 's the little girl with her arms lying out on the counterpane."

VII.

I had sat three nights by the child—I could not watch her for four:
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I could do it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it never would pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tost about,

The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and the darkness without;
My sleep was broken, beside, with dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce would escape with her life;
Then in the gray of the morning it seemed she stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to see to the child.

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we believed her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane.
Say that His day is done! Ah! why should we care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie had passed away.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

THIS is the dying message of an old prophet to the youth of all generations. The prophet is himself Merlin, and The Gleam is that ideal light, the life-guest of every noble soul. "To pursue it is the love of life; to die in its pursuit is joy: for beyond death its glory shines. Therefore now, on the verge of death, he gives his last message to the young, calling on them to follow, as he has done, the light that was never reached, but never failed."

I.

O YOUNG mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea cliff,
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam.

II.

Mighty the Wizard[1]
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learned me Magic!
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,

Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated The Gleam.

III.

Once at the croak of a Raven
who crost it,[2]
A barbarous people,
Blind to the magic,
And deaf to the melody,
Snarled at and cursed me.
A demon vext me,
The light retreated,
The landskip darkened,
The melody deadened,
The Master whispered,
"Follow The Gleam."

IV.

Then to the melody,[3]
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,

And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

V.

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labor,
Slided The Gleam—

VI.

Then, with a melody[4]
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace
Of Arthur the king;
Touched at the golden
Cross of the churches,

Flashed on the Tournament,
Flickered and bickered
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

VII.

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanished
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And can not die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to a
wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a
melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

VIII.

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang through the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,[5]
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came—
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For through the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

IX.

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!

O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

SIR GALAHAD.

SIR GALAHAD was one of the knights of the Round Table, and successful in his quest for the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail, according to the legend, was the cup used at the "Last Supper," and yielded itself only to the pure in heart. In this poem the poet seeks to display the beauty of celestial purity, the elevation of mind belonging to it, and the reality of the invisible world to its vision.

MY good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail:

With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touched, are turned to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And through the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE universe is a revelation of God, distorted perhaps, but true; and God is all about us. In him we live and move and have our being; therefore communion with him is the most natural thing in the world. While recognizing the universe as God, the poet, it will be noticed, preserves at the same time the distinct personality of God and of man.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? though He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I?"

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law say the wise; O Soul, and, let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man can not hear, and the eye of man can not see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

CROSSING THE BAR.

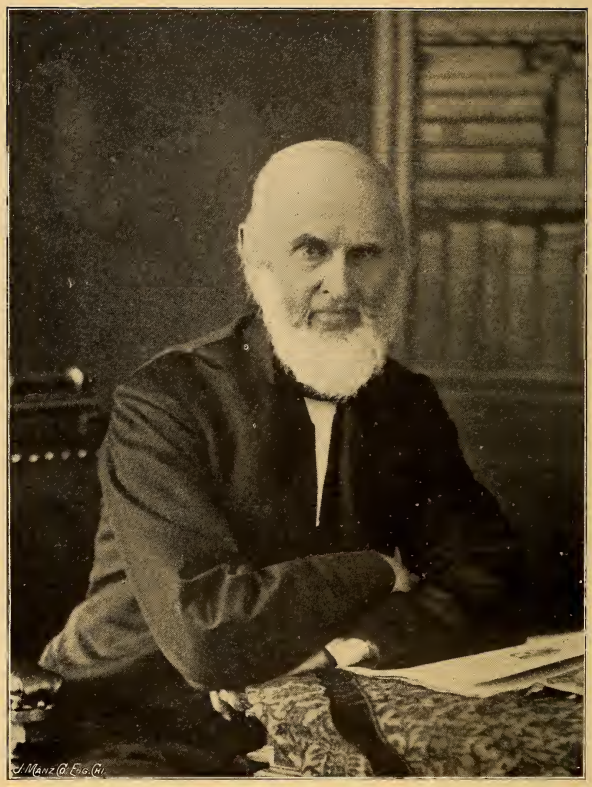
THIS is one of the poet's latest compositions. It is an exquisite picture of the traveler setting out upon a strange journey; but staying himself in confidence that the Great Pilot will bring him in peace and safety to the journey's end.

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.



John G. Whittier

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

It is a great gift to mankind when a poet is raised up among us who devotes his great powers to the sublime purpose of spreading among men the principles of mercy and justice and freedom. This our friend Whittier has done in a degree unsurpassed by any other poet who has spoken to the world in our noble tongue.

—*John Bright.*

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

(1807—1892.)

THE poetry of John Greenleaf Whittier is remarkable for its simplicity and earnestness. He was born in Haverhill, Mass., December 17, 1807, and died in Hampton Falls, N. H., September 7, 1892. As a boy he worked on the farm, attending Haverhill Academy for a time, and afterward teaching school to obtain money for a further education. At twenty-two he entered upon his journalistic career as editor of the *American Manufacturer*, of Boston. Later he edited successively the Haverhill *Gazette*, and the *New England Weekly Review*, Hartford. Whittier devoted much of his strength to the support of the anti-slavery movement. In 1836 he was elected secretary of the American Anti-slavery Society, and went to Philadelphia, where he took the editorship of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*. His fearless attitude provoked much hostility, and he was even menaced by mobs. In 1840 he settled in Amesbury, Mass. Among his poems may be mentioned "Snow Bound," "My Soul and I," "Skipper Ireson's Ride," "Barbara Freitchie," "Maud Muller," etc., etc. He was a member of the Society of Friends, more commonly known as "Quakers."

See "John Greenleaf Whittier, his Life, Genius, and Writings," by W. S. Kennedy, Boston, 1883.

OUR MASTER.

On September 30, 1866, Whittier inclosed this poem with a note to Mr. Fields: "I inclose for Annie Fields a poem of mine which has never seen the light. It presents my view of Christ as the special manifestation of the Love of God to Humanity."

Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow
The mists of earth away!
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
How wide and far we stray!

Hush every lip, close every book,
The strife of tongues forbear;
Why forward reach, or backward look,
For love that clasps like air?

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down:
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For him no depths can drown.

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,
The lineaments restore
Of him we know in outward shape
And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign;
The world's long hope is dim;
The weary centuries watch in vain
The clouds of heaven for him.

Death comes, life goes; the asking eye
And ear are answerless;
The grave is dumb, the hollow sky
Is sad with silentness.

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John his smile of love,
With Peter his rebuke.

In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is his own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with his name.

O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.

Thou judgest us; thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn;
The love that draws us nearer thee
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to thy sight;
And, naked to thy glance,
Our secret sins are in the light
Of thy pure countenance.

Thy healing pains, a keen distress
Thy tender light shines in;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,
Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to thee,
And thou rejectest none.

To thee our full humanity,
Its joys and pains, belong;
The wrong of man to man on thee
Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates thee; who loves, becomes
Therein to thee allied;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
In thee are multiplied.

Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most divine,
The flower of man and God!

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one,
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noon-day sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render thee
Is still our Father's own;
Nor jealous claim or rivalry
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds,
And simple trust can find thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self thy service hath,
No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness, death
Our life, apart from thine.

Apart from thee all gain is loss,
All labor vainly done;
The solemn shadow of thy Cross
Is better than the sun.

Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from thee is hell,
To walk with thee is heaven!

How vain, secure in all thou art,
Our noisy championship!
The sighing of the contrite heart
Is more than flattering lip.

Not thine the bigot's partial plea,
Nor thine the zealot's ban;
Thou well canst spare a love of thee
Which ends in hate of man.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,[1]
We pile no graven stone;
He serves thee best who loveth most[2]
His brothers and thy own.

Thy litanies, sweet offices[3]
Of love and gratitude;
Thy sacramental liturgies
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
The vaulted nave around,
In vain the minster turret lift
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring thy Christmas bells,
Thy inward altars raise;
Its faith and hope thy canticles,
And its obedience praise!

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS.

THIS poem was written in 1865. Of it the late John Bright wrote: "It is worth a crowd of sermons which are spoken from the pulpits of our sects and Churches, which I do not wish to undervalue."

O FRIENDS! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet isles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal for God
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds:
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God! He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound[1]
The love and power of God.

Ye praise his justice; even such
His pitying love I deem:
Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know:
Too dark ye can not paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of his hate,—I know
His goodness and his love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments, too, are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,[2]
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And he can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruisèd reed he will not break,[3]
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts he gave,
And plead his love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded[4] palms in air;
I only know I can not drift
Beyond his love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on thee!

MY SOUL AND I.

THIS poem was written in 1847. It contains a suggestion of personal examination, which, if healthfully conducted, would be of immense value as an aid to the highest spiritual living.

STAND still, my soul, in the silent dark,
I would question thee,
Alone in the shadow drear and stark
With God and me!

What, my soul, was thy errand here?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year?
"Nay, none of these!"

Speak, soul, aright in his holy sight
Whose eye looks still
And steadily on thee through the night:
"To do his will!"

What hast thou done, O soul of mine,
That thou tremblest so?
Hast thou wrought his task, and kept the line
He bade thee go?

What, silent all! art sad of cheer?
Art fearful now?
When God seemed far and men were near,
How brave wert thou!

Aha! thou tremblest!—well I see
Thou 'rt craven grown.
Is it so hard with God and me
To stand alone?

Summon thy sunshine bravery back,
O wretched sprite!
Let me hear thy voice through this deep and black
Abysmal night.

What hast thou wrought for Right and Truth,
For God and Man,
From the golden hours of bright-eyed youth
To life's mid span?

Ah, soul of mine, thy tones I hear,
But weak and low;
Like far sad murmurs on my ear
They come and go.

"I have wrestled stoutly with the Wrong,
And borne the Right
From beneath the footfall of the throng
To life and light.

"Wherever Freedom shivered a chain,[1]
God speed, quoth I;
To Error amidst her shouting train
I gave the lie."

Ah, soul of mine! ah, soul of mine!
Thy deeds are well:
Were they wrought for Truth's sake or for thine?
My soul, pray tell.

"Of all the work my hand hath wrought
Beneath the sky,
Save a place in kindly human thought,
No gain have I."

Go to, go to! for thy very self
Thy deeds were done:
Thou for fame, the miser for pelf,
Your end is one!

And where art thou going, soul of mine?
Canst see the end?
And whither this troubled life of thine
Evermore doth tend?

What daunts thee now? what shakes thee so?
My sad soul, say.
"I see a cloud like a curtain low
Hang o'er my way.

"Whither I go I can not tell:
That cloud hangs black,
High as the heaven and deep as hell,
Across my track.

"I see its shadow coldly enwrap
The souls before.
Sadly they enter it, step by step,
To return no more.

"They shrink, they shudder, dear God! they kneel
To thee in prayer.
They shut their eyes on the cloud, but feel
That it still is there.

"In vain they turn from the dread Before
To the Known and Gone;
For while gazing behind them evermore
Their feet glide on.

"Yet, at times, I see upon sweet pale faces
A light begin
To tremble, as if from holy places
And shrines within.

"And at times methinks their cold lips move
With hymn and prayer,
As if somewhat of awe, but more of love
And hope were there.

"I call on the souls who have left the light
To reveal their lot;
I bend mine ear to that wall of night,
And they answer not.

"But I hear around me sighs of pain
And the cry of fear,
And a sound like the slow, sad dropping of rain,
Each drop a tear!

"Ah, the cloud is dark, and day by day
I am moving thither:
I must pass beneath it on my way—
God pity me!—WHITHER?"

Ah, soul of mine! so brave and wise
In the life-storm loud,
Fronting so calmly all human eyes
In the sunlit crowd!

Now standing apart with God and me
Thou art weakness all,
Gazing vainly after the things to be
Through Death's dread wall.

But never for this, never for this
Was thy being lent;
For the craven's fear is but selfishness,
Like his merriment.

Folly and Fear are sisters twain:
One closing her eyes,
The other peopling the dark inane[2]
With spectral lies.

Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
Whate'er thou fearest;
Round him in calmest music rolls
Whate'er thou hearest.

What to thee is shadow, to Him is day,
And the end He knoweth,
And not on a blind and aimless way
The spirit goeth.

Man sees no future,—a phantom show
Is alone before him;
Past time is dead, and the grasses grow,
And flowers bloom o'er him.

Nothing before, nothing behind;
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.

The Present, the Present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing;
Like the patriarch's angel hold it fast
Till it gives its blessing.[3]

Why fear the night? why shrink from Death,
That phantom wan?
There is nothing in heaven or earth beneath
Save God and man.

Peopling the shadows we turn from him
And from one another;
All is spectral and vague and dim
Save God and our brother!

Like warp and woof all destinies
Are woven fast,
Linked in sympathy like the keys
Of an organ vast.[4]

Pluck one thread, and the web ye mar;
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run.

O restless spirit! wherefore strain
Beyond thy sphere?
Heaven and hell, with their joy and pain,
Are now and here.

Back to thyself is measured well
All thou hast given;
Thy neighbor's wrong is thy present hell,
His bliss, thy heaven.

And in life, in death, in dark and light,
All are in God's care:
Sound the black abyss, pierce the deep of night,
And he is there!

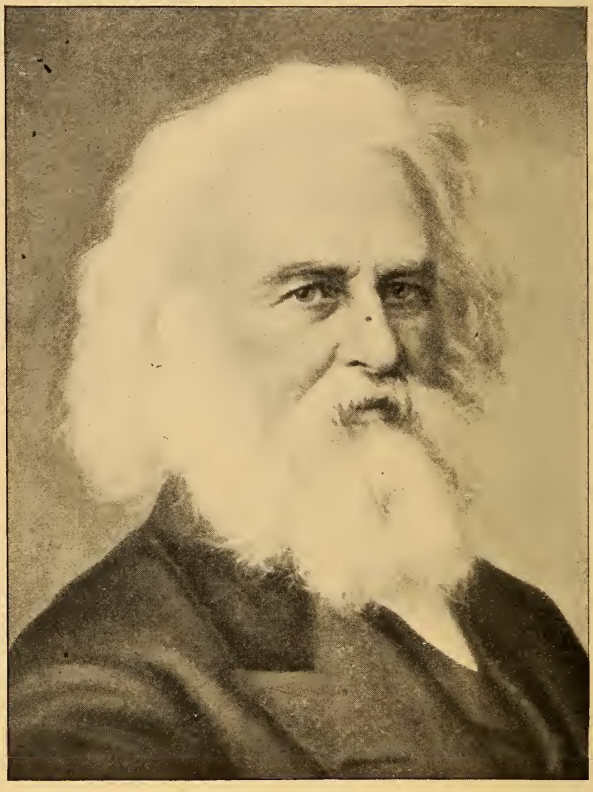
All which is real now remaineth,
And fadeth never:
The hand which upholds it now sustaineth
The soul forever.

Leaning on him, make with reverent meekness
His own thy will,
And with strength from him shall thy utter weakness
Life's task fulfill;

And that cloud itself, which now before thee
Lies dark in view,
Shall with beams of light from the inner glory
Be stricken through.

And like meadow mist through autumn's dawn
Uprolling thin,
Its thickest folds when about thee drawn
Let sunlight in.

Then of what is to be, and of what is done,
Why queriest thou?
The past and the time to be are one,
And both are NOW.



Henry W. Longfellow

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

The poetry of Longfellow furnishes a most signal proof of the benefits conferred by poets upon mankind. It is a gospel of good-will set to music. It has carried sweetness and light to thousands of homes. It is blended with our holiest affections and immortal hopes.

—*F. H. Underwood.*

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

(1807-1882.)

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, the most popular of American poets, was born in Portland, Me., February 27, 1807, and died in Cambridge, Mass., March 24, 1882. In 1825 he was graduated from Bowdoin College, and was immediately offered the professorship of Modern Languages in his *Alma Mater*. Three years were spent in Europe, traveling and studying, and in 1829 he entered upon his labors. In 1835 he resigned his professorship at Bowdoin to accept the chair of Belles-lettres and Modern Languages at Harvard College, preparing himself for his new position by a preliminary year of European travel and study. He remained at Harvard until 1854, when he gave up his pedagogic work in order to devote himself exclusively to writing. The remaining years of his life were spent at his home in Cambridge. His was almost an ideal poetic existence, and his writings to a great extent reflect the conditions of his life. They are mild, serene, benign. Among his best known poems are, "Hiawatha," "Evangeline," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," "Tales of a Wayside Inn," and a number or briefer efforts. His prose works, "Hyperion" and "Outre Mer," have been widely read.

See the "Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow," by Samuel Longfellow, Boston, 1886.

THE LEGEND BEAUTIFUL.

THIS is the Theologian's Tale in the "Tales of a Wayside Inn."

"HADST thou stayed, I must have fled!"
That is what the Vision said.

In his chamber all alone,
Kneeling on the floor of stone,
Prayed the Monk in deep contrition
For his sins of indecision,
Prayed for greater self-denial
In temptation and in trial;
It was noonday by the dial,
And the Monk was all alone.

Suddenly, as if it lightened,
An unwonted splendor brightened
All within him and without him
In that narrow cell of stone;
And he saw the Blessed Vision
Of our Lord, with light Elysian[1]
Like a vesture wrapped about him,
Like a garment round him thrown.

Not as crucified and slain,
Not in agonies of pain,
Not with bleeding hands and feet,
Did the Monk his Master see;
But as in the village street
In the house or harvest-field,
Halt and lame and blind he healed,

When he walked in Galilee.
In an attitude imploring,
Hands upon his bosom crossed,
Wondering, worshiping, adoring,
Knelt the Monk in rapture lost.
Lord, he thought, in heaven that reignest,
Who am I, that thus thou deignest
To reveal thyself to me?
Who am I, that from the center
Of thy glory thou shouldst enter
This poor cell, my guest to be?

Then amid his exaltation,
Loud the convent bell appalling,
From its belfry calling, calling,
Rang through court and corridor
With persistent iteration
He had never heard before.
It was now the appointed hour
When alike in shine or shower,
Winter's cold or summer's heat,
To the convent portals came
All the blind and halt and lame,
All the beggars of the street,
For their daily dole of food
Dealt them by the brotherhood,
And their almoner was he
Who, upon his bended knee,
Rapt in silent ecstasy
Of divinest self-surrender,
Saw the Vision and the Splendor.

Deep distress and hesitation
Mingled with his adoration;
Should he go or should he stay?
Should he leave the poor to wait
Hungry at the convent gate,
Till the Vision passed away?
Should he slight his radiant guest,
Slight this visitant celestial,
For a crowd of ragged, bestial
Beggars at the convent gate?
Would the Vision there remain?
Would the Vision come again?
Then a voice within his breast
Whispered, audible and clear
As if to the outward ear:
"Do thy duty; that is best;
Leave unto thy Lord the rest!"

Straightway to his feet he started,
And with longing look intent
On the Blessed Vision bent,
Slowly from his cell departed,
Slowly on his errand went.

At the gate the poor were waiting,
Looking through the iron grating,
With that terror in the eye
That is only seen in those
Who amid their wants and woes
Hear the sound of doors that close,
And of feet that pass them by;

Grown familiar with disfavor,
Grown familiar with the savor
Of the bread by which men die!
But to-day, they knew not why,
Like the gate of Paradise
Seemed the convent gate to rise,
Like a sacrament divine
Seemed to them the bread and wine.
In his heart the Monk was praying,
Thinking of the homeless poor,
What they suffer and endure;
What we see not, what we see;
And the inward voice was saying:
"Whatsoever thing thou doest
To the least of mine and lowest,
That thou doest unto me!"[2]

Unto me! but had the Vision
Come to him in beggar's clothing,
Come a mendicant imploring,
Would he then have knelt adoring,
Or have listened with derision,
And have turned away with loathing?

Thus his conscience put the question,
Full of troublesome suggestion,
As at length, with hurried pace,
Towards his cell he turned his face,
And beheld the convent bright
With a supernatural light,
Like a luminous cloud expanding

Over floor and wall and ceiling.
But he paused with awe-struck feeling
At the threshold of his door,
For the Vision still was standing
As he left it there before,
When the convent bell appalling,
From its belfry calling, calling,
Summoned him to feed the poor.
Through the long hour intervening
It had waited his return,
And he felt his bosom burn,
Comprehending all the meaning,
When the Blessed Vision said,
"Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled!"

THE BLIGHT OF WORLDLINESS.

THE following selection is from "Morituri Salutamus,"[1] a poem written for the fiftieth anniversary of the class of 1825, in Bowdoin College. For some reason the poet was excessively timid about reading in public; and when he found that he could read this production from behind a pulpit, he said with an expression of relief, "Let me cover myself as much as possible; I wish it might be entirely."

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

IN mediæval Rome, I know not where,
There stood an image with its arm in air,
And on its lifted finger, shining clear,
A golden ring with the device, "Strike here!"
Greatly the people wondered, though none guessed
The meaning that these words but half expressed,

Until a learnèd clerk, who at noonday
With downcast eyes was passing on his way,
Paused, and observed the spot, and marked it well,
Whereon the shadow of the finger fell;
And, coming back at midnight, delved, and found
A secret stairway leading underground.

Down this he passed into a spacious hall,
Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall;
And opposite, in threatening attitude,
With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.
Upon its forehead, like a coronet,
Were these mysterious words of menace set:
"That which I am, I am; my fatal aim
None can escape, not even you luminous flame!"

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,
With cloth of gold, and golden cups enchased
With rubies, and the plates and knives were gold,
And gold the bread and viands manifold.
Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,
Were seated gallant knights in armor clad,
And ladies beautiful with plume and zone;
But they were stone, their hearts within were stone;
And the vast hall was filled in every part
With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed,
The trembling clerk in speechless wonder gazed;
Then from the table, by his greed made bold,
He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,

And suddenly from their seats the guests upsprang,
The vaulted ceiling with loud clamors rang,
The archer sped his arrow, at their call,
Shattering the lambent jewel on the wall,
And all was dark around and overhead;—
Stark on the floor the luckless clerk lay dead!

The writer of this legend then records
Its ghostly application in these words:
The image is the Adversary old,
Whose beckoning finger points to realms of gold;
Our lusts and passions are the downward stair
That leads the soul from a diviner air;
The archer, Death; the flaming jewel, Life:
Terrestrial goods, the goblet and the knife;
The knights and ladies, all whose flesh and bone
By avarice have been hardened into stone;
The clerk, the scholar whom the love of pelf
Tempts from his books and from his nobler self.

The scholar and the world! The endless strife,
The discord in the harmonies of life!
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet serenity of books;
The market-place, the eager love of gain,
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain!

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

SAINT AUGUSTINE! well hast thou said,
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder,[1] if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,
That makes another's virtues less;
The revel of the ruddy wine,
And all occasions of excess;

The longing for ignoble things;
The strife for triumph more than truth;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds,
That have their root in thoughts of ill;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will;—

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we can not soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies,

Nor deem the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.

THE SIFTING OF PETER.

THE poem is based upon the well-known incident recorded in Luke xxii, 31, *seq.*, in which Peter's fitness as under-shepherd is tested by his fidelity in the hour of peril from enemies. Peter fell, but repented; and the poem seeks to bring home the lesson that a noble nature, though it fall, shows its nobility in recovering itself, and, out of its experience, gaining a new source of helpfulness in its ministry for others.

IN St. Luke's Gospel we are told
How Peter in the days of old
Was sifted;
And now, though ages intervene,
Sin is the same, while time and scene
Are shifted.

Satan desires us, great and small,
As wheat to sift us, and we all
Are tempted;
Not one, however rich or great,
Is by his station or estate
Exempted.

No house so safely guarded is
But he, by some device of his,
Can enter;
No heart hath armor so complete
But he can pierce with arrows fleet
Its center.

For all at last the cock will crow,
Who hear the warning voice, but go
Unheeding,
Till thrice and more they have denied
The Man of Sorrows, crucified
And bleeding.

One look of that pale, suffering face
Will make us feel the deep disgrace
Of weakness;
We shall be sifted till the strength
Of self-conceit be changed at length
To meekness.

Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession;
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.

But noble souls, through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger,
And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer.

J. R. Lowell

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

Faith and joy are the ascensive forces of his song. At times he places you

So nigh to the . . . heart of God,
You almost seem to feel it beat
Down from the sunshine and up from the sod.

—*Clarence Stedman.*

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

(1819-1891.)

No American man of letters has combined to so great an extent the qualities of poet, critic, essayist, and diplomatist as James Russell Lowell. In each of these fields he exerted his strength, and in each he proved eminent. Born in Cambridge, Mass., February 22, 1819, he entered Harvard College at an early age, being graduated in 1838. In 1855 he was elected to the chair of Belles-lettres in his *Alma Mater*, and after two years spent in travel, took up his professional work. But his position did not seem to hinder his literary labors. From 1857 to 1862 he was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and from 1863 to 1872, of the *North American Review*. His diplomatic services were rendered during the administrations of Presidents Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur, when he acted, first as Minister to Spain, then as Minister to England. He died at his home in Cambridge, August 12, 1891. Of his poems, "The Vision of Sir Launfal," "Commemoration Ode," and "The Biglow Papers" are perhaps best known. His prose writings are distinguished by a noble style, and abound in delicate fancies.

See "The Life and Letters of James Russell Lowell," edited by Charles Eliot Norton.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.

THIS is Lowell's rendering of the search for the Holy Grail. "The plot," he says, "is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the supposed date of King Arthur's reign."

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST.

OVER his keys the musing organist,
Beginning doubtfully and far away,
First lets his fingers wander as they list,
And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:
Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,
First guessed by faint auroral flashes sent
Along the wavering vista of his dream.

Not only around our infancy
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;[1]
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb[2] and know it not.

Over our manhood bend the skies;
Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies;
With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood
Waits with its benedicite;[3]
And to our age's drowsy blood
Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest has his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there 's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,

And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice[4] ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'T is enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we can not help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'T is as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'T is the natural way of living;
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal now
Remembered the keeping of his vow?

PART FIRST.

I.

"My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy Grail;
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep;
Here on the rushes[5] will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew."

Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.

II.

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,
The little birds sang as if it were
The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:
The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray:
'T was the proudest hall in the North Countree,
And never its gates might opened be,
Save to lord or lady of high degree;
Summer besieged it on every side,
But the churlish stone her assaults defied;
She could not scale the chilly wall,
Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
Over the hills and out of sight:
Green and broad was every tent,
And out of each a murmur went
Till the breeze fell off at night.

III.

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden[6] knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall

In his siege of three hundred summers long,
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
Had cast them forth: so, young and strong,
And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his maiden mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV.

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
And morning in the young knight's heart;
Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,
And gloomed by itself apart;
The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

V.

As Sir Launfal made morn[7] through the darksome gate,
He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same;
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan[8] shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI.

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:
"Better to me the poor man's crust,
Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door;
That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives only the worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives a slender mite,[9]
And gives to that which is out of sight,
That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite,—
The hand can not clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND.

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak
From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold[10] and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;
The little brook heard it, and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams;

Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
That crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one:
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice;
'T was as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,
Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
By the elfin builders of the frost.
Within the hall are song and laughter,
The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,
And sprouting is every corbel[11] and rafter
With lightsome green of ivy and holly;

Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide
Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
Hunted to death in its galleries blind;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,
And rattles and wrings
The icy strings,
Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was—"Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"
The voice of the seneschal[12] flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

PART SECOND.

I.

THERE was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;

The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitly
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

II.

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;[13]
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III.

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare
Was idle mail 'gainst the barbèd air,
For it was just at the Christmas time;
So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
In the light and warmth of long-ago;
He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
He can count the camels in the sun,

As over the red-hot sands they pass
To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
And with its own self like an infant played,
And waved its signal of palms.

IV.

"For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;"—
The happy camels may reach the spring,
But Sir Launfal sees only the grewsome thing,
The leper, lank as the rain-blanched bone,
That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
In the desolate horror of his disease.

V.

And Sir Launfal said: "I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;[14]
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side:
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to thee!"

VI.

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he girt his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.

The heart within him was ashes and dust;[15]
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink,
'T was a moldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'T was water out of a wooden bowl,—
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 't was red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII.

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,—
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.[16]

VIII.

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
That mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;
And the voice that was softer than silence said:
"Lo it is I, be not afraid!
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;

This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water his blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

IX.

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swound:
"The Grail in my castle here is found!
Hang my idle armor up on the wall,
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
He must be fenced with stronger mail
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

X.

The castle gate stands open now,
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
No longer scowl the turrets tall,
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;
When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
She entered with him in disguise,
And mastered the fortress by surprise;
There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
Has hall and bower at his command;
And there 's no poor man in the North Countree
But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

A GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

THIS poem is founded upon an incident in the life of Oliver Cromwell. The story is that in the year 1637 Cromwell and his cousin, John Hampden, being discouraged by the failure of their political efforts, decided to emigrate to America. The vessel in which they had engaged passage was forbidden to sail by an order in council. However, this story is without adequate historical foundation. In the poem, Cromwell and Hampden are pictured standing on the wharf, considering the advisability of sailing in defiance of the king's order. Hampden suggests that they "seek out that savage clime where men as yet are free." Cromwell replies at length, declining to leave England for the reasons set forth. The poem is here somewhat abridged.

"O CROMWELL, we are fallen on evil times!
There was a day when England had wide room
For honest men as well as foolish kings:
But now the uneasy stomach of the time
Turns squeamish at them both. Therefore let us
Seek out that savage clime,[1] where men as yet
Are free:" . . .
So spake he, and meantime the other stood
With wide gray eyes still reading the blank air,
As if upon the sky's blue wall he saw
Some mystic sentence, written by a hand,
Such as of old made pale the Assyrian king,[2]
Girt with his satraps in the blazing feast.

"HAMPDEN! a moment since, my purpose was
To fly with thee,—for I will call it flight,
Nor flatter it with any smoother name,—
But something in me bids me not to go;
And I am one, thou knowest, who unmoved
By what the weak deem omens, yet give heed
And reverence due to whatsoe'er my soul
Whispers of warning to the inner ear.
Moreover, as I know that God brings round
His purposes in ways undreamed by us,
And makes the wicked but his instruments
To hasten their own swift and sudden fall,
I see the beauty of his providence
In the King's order: blind, he will not let
His doom part from him, but must bid it stay. . . .
Why should we fly? Nay, why not rather stay
And rear again our Zion's crumbled walls,
Not, as of old the walls of Thebes were built,[3]
By minstrel twanging, but, if need should be,
With the more potent music of our swords?
Think'st thou that score of men beyond the sea
Claim more God's care than all of England here?
No: when he moves his arm, it is to aid
Whole peoples. . . .
Believe me, 't is the mass of men he loves;
And, where there is most sorrow and most want,
Where the high heart of man is trodden down
The most, 't is not because he hides his face
From them in wrath, as purblind teachers prate:
Not so: there most is he, for there is he[4]
Most needed. Men who seek for Fate abroad

Are not so near His heart as they who dare
Frankly to face her where she faces them,
On their own threshold, where their souls are strong
To grapple with and throw her.
No, Hampden! they have half-way conquered Fate
Who go half-way to meet her,—as will I.
Freedom hath yet a work for me to do;
So speaks that inward voice which never yet
Spake falsely, when it urged the spirit on
To noble deeds for country and mankind.
And, for success, I ask no more than this,—
To bear unflinching witness to the truth.
All true whole men succeed; for what is worth
Success's name, unless it be the thought,
The inward surety, to have carried out
A noble purpose to a noble end,
Although it be the gallows or the block?
'T is only Falsehood that doth ever need
These outward shows of gain to bolster her.
By it we prove the weaker with our swords;
Truth only needs to be for once spoke out,
And there's such music in her, such strange rhythm,
As makes men's memories her joyous slaves,
And clings around the soul, as the sky clings
Round the mute earth, forever beautiful,
And, if o'erclouded, only to burst forth
More all-embracingly divine and clear:
Get but the truth once uttered, and 'tis like
A star new-born, that drops into its place,
And which, once circling in its placid round
Not all the tumult of the earth can shake.

. . . . . .

"New times demand new measures and new men;
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our fathers' day were best;
And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
Made wiser by the steady growth of truth. . . .
No man is born into the world whose work
Is not born with him; there is always work,
And tools to work withal, for those who will;
And blessèd are the horny hands of toil!
The busy world shoves angrily aside
The man who stands with arms akimbo set,
Until occasion tells him what to do;
And he who waits to have his task marked out
Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled.
The time is ripe, and rotten-ripe, for change; . . .
Then let it come: I have no dread of what
Is called for by the instinct of mankind;
Nor think I that God's world will fall apart
Because we tear a parchment more or less.
Truth is eternal, but her effluence,
With endless change, is fitted to the hour;
Her mirror is turned forward to reflect
The promise of the future, not the past.
He who would win the name of truly great
Must understand his own age and the next,
And make the present ready to fulfill
Its prophecy, and with the future merge
Gently and peacefully, as wave with wave.
The future works out great men's purposes;
The present is enough for common souls. . . .

Let us speak plain: there is more force in names[5]
Than most men dream of; and a lie may keep
Its throne a whole age longer, if it skulk
Behind the shield of some fair-seeming name.
Let us call tyrants *tyrants*, and maintain
That only freedom comes by grace of God,
And all that comes not by his grace must fall;
For men in earnest have no time to waste
In patching fig-leaves for the naked truth.

"I will have one more grapple with the man
Charles Stuart: . . .
I, perchance,
Am one raised up by the Almighty arm
To witness some great truth to all the world.
Souls destined to o'erleap the vulgar lot,
And mould the world unto the scheme of God,
Have a fore-consciousness of their high doom,
As men are known to shiver at the heart
When the cold shadow of some coming ill
Creeps slowly o'er their spirits unawares.
Hath Good less power of prophecy than Ill?
How else could men whom God hath called to sway
Earth's rudder, and to steer the bark of Truth,
Beating against the tempest toward her port,
Bear all the mean and buzzing grievances,
The petty martyrdoms, wherewith Sin strives
To weary out the tethered hope of Faith? . . .
My God! when I read o'er the bitter lives
Of men whose eager hearts were quite too great
To beat beneath the cramped mode of the day,

And see them mocked at by the world they love,— . . .
When I see this, spite of my faith in God,
I marvel how their hearts bear up so long;
Nor could they but for this same prophecy,
This inward feeling of the glorious end.

"Deem me not fond;[6] but in my warmer youth,
Ere my heart's bloom was soiled and brushed away,
I had great dreams of mighty things to come;
Of conquest, whether by the sword or pen
I knew not; but some conquest I would have,
Or else swift death: now wiser grown in years,
I find youth's dreams are but the flutterings
Of those strong winds whereon the soul shall soar
In aftertime to win a starry throne;
And so I cherish them, for they were lots,
Which I, a boy, cast in the helm of Fate.
Now will I draw them, since a man's right hand,
A right hand guided by an earnest soul,
With a true instinct, takes the golden prize
From out a thousand blanks. What men call luck
Is the prerogative of valiant souls,
The fealty life pays its rightful kings.
The helm is shaking now, and I will stay
To pluck my lot forth; it were sin to flee!"

So they two turned together; one to die,
Fighting for freedom on the bloody field;[7]
The other, far more happy, to become
A name earth wears forever next her heart;

One of the few that have a right to rank
With the true Makers: for his spirit wrought
Order from Chaos; proved that right divine
Dwelt only in the excellence of truth;
And far within old Darkness' hostile lines
Advanced and pitched the shining tents of Light.

THE SEARCH.

THE central idea of this poem is identical with the main thought of "A Parable," and of "The Vision of Sir Launfal." Not in Nature, not in Art, but in Humanity we must look for Christ.

I WENT to seek for Christ,
And Nature seemed so fair
That first the woods and fields my youth enticed,
And I was sure to find him there:
The temple I forsook,
And to the solitude
Allegiance paid; but Winter came and shook
The crown and purple from my wood;
His snows, like desert sands, with scornful drift,
Besieged the columned aisle and palace-gate;
My Thebes,[1] cut deep with many a solemn rift,
But epitaphed her own sepulchred state:
Then I remembered whom I went to seek,
And blessed blunt Winter for his counsel bleak.

Back to the world I turned,
For Christ, I said, is King;
So the cramped alley and the hut I spurned,
As far beneath his sojourning:

Mid power and wealth I sought,
But found no trace of him,
And all the costly offerings I had brought
With sudden rust and mould grew dim:
I found his tomb, indeed, where, by their laws,
All must on stated days themselves imprison,
Mocking with bread a dead creed's grinning jaws,
Witless[2] how long the life had thence arisen;
Due sacrifice to this they set apart,
Prizing it more than Christ's own living heart.

So from my feet the dust
Of the proud World I shook;
Then came dear Love and shared with me his crust,
And half my sorrow's burden took.
After the World's soft bed,
Its rich and dainty fare,
Like down seemed Love's coarse pillow to my head,
His cheap food seemed as manna rare;
Fresh-trodden prints of bare and bleeding feet,
Turned to the heedless city whence I came,
Hard by I saw, and springs of worship sweet
Gushed from my cleft heart smitten by the same;
Love looked me in the face and spake no words,
But straight I knew those footprints were the Lord's.

I followed where they led,
And in a hovel rude,
With naught to fence the weather from his head,
The King I sought for meekly stood;

A naked, hungry child
Clung round his gracious knee,
And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled
To bless the smile that set him free;
New miracles I saw his presence do,—
No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,
The gathered chips into a woodpile grew,
The broken morsel swelled to goodly store;
I knelt and wept: my Christ no more I seek,
His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

A PARABLE.

THE poem seeks to enforce a double lesson—first, that Pharisaism is a modern as well as an ancient evil; and, second, that the highest form of faith in God's sight is the faith that works by love in the interest of the poor and forlorn.

SAID Christ our Lord, "I will go and see
How the men, my brethren, believe in me."
He passed not again through the gate of birth,
But made himself known to the children of earth.

Then said the chief priests, and rulers, and kings,
"Behold, now, the Giver of all good things!
Go to, let us welcome with pomp and state[1]
Him who alone is mighty and great."

With carpets of gold the ground they spread
Wherever the Son of Man should tread,
And in palace-chambers lofty and rare
They lodged him, and served him with kingly fare.

Great organs surged through arches dim
Their jubilant floods in praise of him;
And in church, and palace, and judgment-hall,
He saw his own image high over all.[2]

But still, wherever his steps they led,
The Lord in sorrow bent down his head,
And from under the heavy foundation-stones,
The son of Mary heard bitter groans.

And in church, and palace, and judgment-hall,
He marked great fissures that rent the wall,
And opened wider and yet more wide
As the living foundation heaved and sighed.

"Have ye founded your thrones and altars, then,
On the bodies and souls of living men?
And think ye that building shall endure,
Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor?

"With gates of silver and bars of gold
Ye have fenced my sheep from their Father's fold;
I have heard the dropping of their tears
In heaven these eighteen hundred years."

"O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt,
We build but as our fathers built;
Behold thine images, how they stand,
Sovereign and sole, through all our land.

"Our task is hard,—with sword and flame
To hold thy earth forever the same,
And with sharp crooks of steel to keep
Still, as thou leftest them, thy sheep."[3]

Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set he in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garment-hem,
For fear of defilement, "Lo, here," said he,
"The images ye have made of me!"[4]

NOTES.

JOHN MILTON.

COMUS.

1. *Pinfold.* A pound or place where strayed animals are confined.

2. Comp. Job xiv, 14. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my *change* come."

3. "Ambrosia" was the food of the gods, hence here in the general sense of heavenly; "weed" which, with us, is usually connected with mourning, has here the older sense of clothing in general.

4. *Strong siding;* i. e., one strongly on the side of the virtuous mind.

5. Milton's trinity of graces, Faith, Hope, and *Chastity.*

6. "Thinkest thou that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matt. xxvi, 53.

7. *Over-exquisite.* Too inquisitive.

8. *To cast.* That is, to predict.

9. *Grant they be so.* That is, grant they be evils.

10. *To seek.* In the sense of needing to seek or search, hence unprepared.

11. *Unprincipled.* That is, wanting in the knowledge of the principles of a thing.

12. *Stir.* Agitate, as with fear.

13. *Seeks to.* Resorts to.

14. *To-ruffled.* The "to" is simple augmentation of the verb.

15. *The center.* Supply "of the earth."

16. *Affects.* Is inclined to.

17. The fabled garden of the Hesperides produced golden apples. It was one of the labors of Hercules to slay the dragon who guarded it.

18. *Unsunned.* Kept in the dark. Mammon "suns" his treasure when he brings it out to feast his eyes in counting it over.

19. *Wink on.* Close his eyes to.

20. *It recks me not.* It matters nothing to me.

21. *To dog.* To hunt or track like a hound.

22. *Unowned.* Unprotected.

23. *Infer.* Argue.

24. Suspicion that looks with eyes askance.

25. *Quivered nymph.* A nymph equipped with bow and arrows.

26. *Trace.* Traverse.

27. *Infamous.* Of bad repute.

28. *Bandite.* For bandit.

29. *Shagged.* Rough, hence forbidding or fearsome.

30. *Unblenched.* Undaunted.

31. *Swart.* Black or dark.

32. *Antiquity.* He had just cited instances from mediæval legends.

33. *Arms.* Equipment.

34. *Dian.* Diana, the goddess of hunting, chastity, and marriage, and represented with a bow and arrow.

35. *Brinded.* Brindled, of a gray or tawny color, with streaks of darker hue.

36. *Gorgon.* The name of three frightful maidens, whose hair was hissing serpents, and who had wings, brazen claws, and enormous teeth. So horrible was one, Medusa, that whoever looked upon her was changed into stone. Minerva had the Medusa head for the center of her shield or breastplate.

37. *Dashed.* Put to shame.

38. *Lackey.* Serve.

39. *Oft.* Frequent.

40. *Clotted.* Foul.

41. *Imbodies and imbrutes.* That is, the soul assumes the material qualities of the body, and becomes brutish in its instincts.

42. Which was to rule, order, and subdue the body by its higher instincts and aspiration.

43. Homer and Virgil.

44. *Chimeras.* A fabled monster represented with a lion's head, a goat's body, and a dragon's tail, placed by Virgil at the gates of hell. (Æneid 6, 288.)

45. The fabled islands of the sirens or sea-nymphs, who had the power of charming by their voice all who heard them sing.

46. *Navel.* Center.

47. *Murmurs.* Murmured incantations.

48. *Unmolding.* Erasing or blotting out.

49. *Charactered.* Engraved; our word character being derived from a word applied to an instrument for marking or engraving.

50. A croft is an inclosed field, and the picture is that of a field sloping up out of the wood in the hollow.

51. *Stabled wolves.* Wolves which are within the sheepfold.

52. *Hecate.* The queen of the lower world, and goddess of sorcery and witchcraft.

53. *Unweeting.* Unsuspicious, unwitting.

54. *Dew-besprent.* Besprinkled with dew.

55. *Flighted.* Flying.

56. *That.* So that.

57. *Still.* Ever, always.

58. *Lawns.* Open places in the forest.

59. *Period.* Sentence.

60. *Enthralled.* Enslaved.

61. 2 Cor. iv, 17.

62. *Griesly.* Horrible.

63. *Acheron.* The infernal river, but here used for hell itself.

64. *Harpies and Hydras.* Fabulous horrors.

65. *Purchase.* In the early sense of a thing gotten by plundering.

66. A nymph of Diana, who, when pursued by Apollo, was changed into a laurel-tree.

67. *Rind.* Outside covering, the body.

68. *Nepenthes.* An Egyptian drug given by Polydamna, wife of Thone, to Helen, who administered it to her husband, Menelaus. It was reputed to induce forgetfulness of care and indifference to trouble.

69. *Unexempt.* That from which no one is exempt.

70. *That have been.* Connect *that* with the *you* of six lines before.

71. *Vizored.* Masked.

72. *Liquorish.* Dainty, tempting.

73. *Juno.* Queen of heaven and goddess of marriage.

74. *Budge.* Austere. Budge was a fur used for the edging of gowns worn by scholastics or professional men; hence the secondary meaning of scholastic, pedantic, surly, etc.

75. *Stoic. Cynic.* The Stoics and Cynics both emphasized the virtues of continence and temperance. The Cynic tub has reference, of course, to the tub of Diogenes.

76. *Unwithdrawing.* Lavish.

77. *Hutched.* A hutch is a chest. To hutch is to store up as in a chest.

78. *Pulse.* Beans, pease, etc.

79. *Frieze.* A shaggy woolen cloth.

80. The meaning of this is plain enough; but it is curious that Milton should find diamonds in the deep, and their specific gravity such as would bring them to the surface.

81. *Grain.* There is a reddish dye known as "grain;" and the meaning here seems to be cheeks of sorry or inferior red.

82. *Sampler.* A pattern for sewing.

83. *Tease.* Here in the original sense of "to card."

84. *Vermeil-tinctured.* Vermilion-colored.

85. The six lines which follow are intended for an "aside."

86. *Pranked.* Decked out.

87. *Bolt.* Utter boastingly.

THE COURAGE OF OBEDIENCE.

1. Addressed to Cyriack Skinner, and written apparently (see first line) on the third anniversary of the day on which the poet's loss of sight became total. The poem is a noble expression of that courageous submission to God's will which comes only to one conscious of suffering in the line of duty.

2. *Conscience.* Consciousness, as in Heb. x, 2, and commonly in Milton's day.

3. Salmasius, the famous French scholar, at the request of Charles II, wrote a treatise on the execution of Charles I. Milton prepared the reply, and, when told that the task would cost him his remaining eye, said he did not hesitate to incur the penalty.

4. "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew." Psa. xxxix, 6.

TO EVERYTHING A SEASON.

1. Addressed to Cyriack Skinner, an intimate friend of Milton's, and an ardent student of mathematics (Euclid) and physics (Archimedes). Comp. line seven. His mother was a daughter of Sir Edward Coke, the eminent jurist; hence the reference to the "grandsire" in the first four lines.

2. In Greek mythology, Themis is the personification of the order of things established by law, custom, and equity.

3. That is, he will indulge in innocent mirth, which leaves no sting of bitterness.

4. Thought to be a reference to the campaigns of Charles XII of Sweden, and Louis XIV of France, or perhaps to the Thirty Years' War.

5. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Eccles. iii, 1.

6. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matt. vi, 34.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

1. Milton's blindness came upon him gradually: one eye became useless in 1651, when the poet was forty-three years old; two years later he became totally blind.

2. The reference is to the Parable of the Talents in Matt. xxv, 14–30.

3. *Fondly.* Foolishly.

4. Milton often refers to his blindness in the spirit of a true resignation; and sometimes as if he thought that God, in blinding his bodily eyes, had meant "to enlarge and clear his inner vision, and make him one of the world's truest seers and prophets."

THE BETTER PART.

1. The lady to whom this was addressed is unknown.

2. Comp. Matt. vii, 13.

3. Comp. Luke x, 42; Ruth i, 14.

4. *Overween.* Are arrogant.

5. Comp. the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. xxv), and the "hope maketh not ashamed" of Romans v, 5.

THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

1. When Milton was reproached by a friend for his apparently aimless life of mere study, and urged to devote his talents to the Church or some other active profession, his reply was, that he could not make haste in such a matter, and that in the work of life it was not so much a question of being *late* as of being *fit.* Nevertheless, he adds: "That you may see that I am something suspicious of my-

self, and do take notice of a certain *belatedness* in me, I . . . send you some of my nightward thoughts;" whereupon follows this sonnet.

2. Milton was twenty-three on Dec. 9, 1631, at which time also he was a Bachelor of Arts of three years' standing, and nearing the end of his stay at Cambridge University.

3. *Semblance.* That is, his youthful appearance.

4. *Endu'th.* Put on.

5. *Still.* Ever or continually.

6. *Even.* Equal, in proportion.

7. "He had said, 'It shall be still in strictest measure even;' now he corrects himself, 'Nay, all my life is so already, if I have grace to use it as in God's sight.'"

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

1. This poem was composed in 1629, when Milton was twenty-one years of age, and a student at Cambridge. The argument of the poem turns upon the thought of Christ as the Prince of Peace. At his coming as the Son of Mary, the world was at peace, and, though his supremacy in the earth could only be achieved by the downfall of opposing forces, yet the end would be peace. In which assurance the poem closes with the peaceful scene of the child at rest in his mother's arms. "Peace begins and peace ends this splendid song, and between the goals of peace, in finely-contrasted music, the sacred beauty of the Christian heaven and the solemn unity of God is set over against the 'dismal horror' and polytheism of the pagan worship."

2. The "holy sages" here are the prophets who predicted the mediatorial offices of Christ.

3. Man, by sin, had forfeited God's favor; the forfeiture was perpetual and fatal unless provision had been made for forgiveness through Christ's redemption.

4. Romans v, 1.

5. *Wont.* Used.

6. John xvii, 5; Philippians ii, 6.

7. In the later Greek poets, Helios (the sun) is described as having a magnificent palace in the east from which he starts in the morning in a chariot drawn by four horses.

8. *Wizards.* The wise men or magi. Matt. ii.

9. *Prevent.* Used here in the old sense of "anticipate," as in Psalm cxix, 148, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches," and so frequently in Scripture.

10. Our Lord's birth was heralded by song of angels. Luke ii, 13.

11. A reminiscence of the method of Isaiah's commission, in which "one of the seraphim, having a live coal which he had taken from off the altar, laid it on my mouth." Isa. vi, 6.

12. *Gaudy.* Holiday or festival.

13. Landor says of stanzas iv–vii that, to his mind, they are incomparably the noblest piece of lyric poetry in any modern language.

14. The "hooked" chariot here has probable reference to the war-chariot in use among the Persians and Britons, the axles of which were mounted with sharp, sickle-shaped blades to cut to pieces everything that came in their way.

15. At the time of our Lord's birth there was universal peace among the nations.

16. *Awful.* Full of awe.

17. *Sovran.* Sovereign.

18. *Whist.* Hushed.

19. *Ocean.* To be pronounced as if having three syllables.

20. *Birds of calm.* A reference to the halcyon bird or kingfisher. According to the fable, Ceyx, King of Trachis, in Thessaly, married Halcyone, daughter of Æolus, god of the winds. Upon the death of Ceyx, husband and wife were changed into kingfishers, birds which bred at the winter solstice, when, through the influence of Æolus, all gales were hushed and the sea calmed, so that their floating nest might ride uninjured over the waves during the seven proverbial "halcyon days."

21. The astrologers believed that the stars affected the lives and destinies of men, and this power was termed, technically, "influence." So in Job xxxviii, 31: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?"

22. *For all.* Notwithstanding.

23. *Lucifer.* Star of the morning.

24. *Orbs.* Used here for orbits.

25. *Bespake.* Emphatic for "spake."

26. *Room.* Place.

27. *As.* For "as if."

28. *Lawn.* In the old sense of an open space between woods.

29. *Or ere.* Before. Compare the "or ever" in Eccles. xii, 6: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed," etc.

30. *Than.* Old form for "then," used here for the rhyme.

31. *Pan.* In Greek mythology the god of shepherds. By Spenser and Milton used as a poetical rendering of "I am the good shepherd." John x, 11.

32. *Silly.* Here in the sense of "simple" or "rustic."

33. *Strook.* Struck.

34. *Noise.* The word was formerly used for band-music, and in the Bible and early English writers the word is frequently the equivalent of music, as here.

35. *Close.* The cadence at the end of a piece of music.

36. *The hollow round.* That is, the orbit of the moon. The meaning is: "Nature, upon hearing so sweet a sound thrilling the earth's atmosphere under the concave of the moon's orbit, was now almost won," etc.

37. *Alone.* Of or by itself, without nature's aid.

38. *In happier union.* Than that of nature.

39. *Quire.* Now written choir, and here used to express music played in concert.

40. *Unexpressive.* Inexpressible.

41. This whole stanza paraphrases admirably the wonderful description of creation in Job xxxviii, 4–11.

42. *Weltering.* Rolling.

43. A reference to the "music of the spheres," an ancient notion proceeding upon the theory that the mere proper motion of the planets must produce sound, and, as the planets move at regular intervals, the sounds must be harmonious. According to Plato, a syren sits on each planet, who carols a most sweet song, agreeing to the motion of her own planet, but harmonizing with the others. Milton argued that we might hear this music were our hearts pure and our minds not bowed down to earth.

44. The nine spheres of Milton's system were those of the seven planets (the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), with that of the stars and the *primum mobile* which gave motion to the whole.

45. *Consort.* Here used for concert.

46. *Age of Gold.* The happy time when all men's good shall be each man's rule.

47. *Speckled.* Spotted, as with plague-spots.

48. *Peering.* To look intently or curiously, to peep.

49. A reference to the legend of Astræa, who lived in the Golden Age among men, but withdrew to heaven when wickedness prevailed.

50. *Sheen.* Brightness.

51. *Tissued.* Interwoven.

52. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them." John xvii, 22.

53. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thess. iv, 16.

54. *Ychained.* Y is the prefix of the past participle, an archaic form.

55. Exodus xix, 16.

56. Matt. xxiv, 29, 30.

57. Revelation xx, 1–3.

58. *Swinges.* Lashes.

59. *Oracles.* The voices of heathen deities.

60. Delphi was a small town in Phocis, but one of the most celebrated in Greece on account of its Oracle of Apollo. In the center of the temple ("the prophetic cell") was a small opening in the ground, from which, at inter-

vals, an intoxicating vapor arose. Over this chasm was placed a tripod, on which the priestess, called Pythia, took her seat whenever the Oracle was to be consulted. Through her, communication was made to the priests, and through the priests to the people.

61. It is thought the description of this stanza refers to the universal grief which is said to have pervaded the ancient world upon the announcement being made that the great god Pan was dead.

62. Lars were the good and Lemures the evil spirits of the dead, the latter being privileged to wander about at night and torment the living. Here they stand for ghosts of whatever moral quality.

63. *Flamens.* Priests.

64. *Quaint.* Here in the sense of an elaborate and artistic rite.

65. Virgil, describing the omens attending Cæsar's fate, refers to the gods of bronze and ivory which, "in the fanes, did weep and sweat with anguish."

66. The worship of the Phœnicians was a sensual nature-worship, in which the worship of the sun god held chief place. The sun god, Baal, was worshiped under a variety of forms and attributes, each of which became a separate god, as Peor among the Moabites.

67. The reference is to 1 Samuel v, 3, 4, where Dagon, the idol of the Philistines, is twice found prostrate before the ark of Jehovah.

68. *Ashtaroth* is the plural of Ashtareth, as Baalim is of Baal. Ashtareth was properly the female reflection of the sun god when regarded as creator; hence there were as many Ashtaroth as Baalim. Later, Ashtoreth came to represent the moon.

69. *Hammon.* An Egyptian deity, protector of flocks, and represented with the horns of a ram.

70. *Thammuz.* The Syrian god of love, who, dying of a wound received from a boar, was annually mourned by women.

71. The sun god was worshiped by the Israelites under the name Moloch. The idol was of brass and hollow. It was heated with fire from within, and the children were consumed in his outstretched arms, while their cries were drowned in the noise of drums and cymbals.

72. *Grisly.* Frightful, horrible.

73. Osiris was a chief divinity among the Egyptians. Isis was his consort, and Orus his child. Of the animals worshiped by this people, the chief were the bull Apis and the dog Anubis.

74. The worship of the bull Apis was connected with that of Osiris; hence, by substitution, the "lowings." Osiris was not in the form of a bull.

75. Osiris, according to the tradition, was, at the instigation of his brother Set, placed in a chest, thrown into the Nile, and borne away by the river.

76. *Sable-stoled.* Black-robed. *Sorcerers.* Here in the sense of priests.

77. *Eyn.* Old plural of eye.

78. *Typhon.* According to the Greek myth, the monstrous son of Gæa, who, revolting against Jupiter, was cast into Tartarus.

79. *In bed*, but in the act of rising, as the word "orient" further on shows.

80. Manifestly the ghost is "fettered" only in the sense that he is doomed to walk the earth; and though at dawn he slips into his separate grave, it is but to reappear at night.

81. *Fays.* Fairies.

82. The "night-steeds" which draw the chariot of the night.

83. The reference here is to the "star of Bethlehem," which signified to the wise men the birth of Christ. Matt. ii, 2.

84. "The star went before them (the wise men), and *stood* over where the young child was."

85. *Bright-harnessed.* In bright armor. Ahab's armor, in 1 Kings xxii, 34, is called "harness."

86. *Serviceable.* Not simply able, but prepared and ready to serve.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

ODE.

1. "The morning breeze coming from the fields that were dark during the hours of sleep." Knight.

2. *Pansy.* French, "Pensée." Cf. *Hamlet*, "Pansies, that's for thoughts."

3. The poet owes this thought to Plato, but the idea commends itself to Wordsworth very differently from what it did to the Greek philosopher.

4. *Humorous stage.* The stage whereon are displayed humors; that is, whims, fancies.

5. *With all the Persons.* That is, with the *dramatis personæ*.

6. This figure, describing one sense in terms of another, is illustrated in another of Wordsworth's poems, where he speaks of "soft eye-music."

7. Coleridge says of this passage: "In what sense can the magnificent attributes, above quoted, be appropriated to a *child*, which would not make them equally suitable to a *bee*, or a *dog*, or a *field of corn*, or even to a ship, or to the wind and waves that propel it? The Omnipresent Spirit works equally in *them* as in the child, and the child is equally unconscious of it as they."

8. *Fallings from us, vanishings.* "The outward, sensible universe, visible and tangible, seeming to fall away from us as unreal, to vanish in unsubstantiality." (Knight.) Wordsworth once said to Professor Bonamy Price: "There was a time in my life when I had to push against something that resisted, to be sure that there was anything outside of me."

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

1. That is, has retained his ideals.

2. *If they come at all.* That is, wealth, honors, and worldly state.

3. Wordsworth states, in a note to this poem, that many of the passages were suggested by what is known as excellent in the character of Lord Nelson, who died shortly before it was written. He adds, however, that many elements of the character of the "Happy Warrior" were drawn from his brother John, who perished by shipwreck when in the service of the East India Company.

ODE TO DUTY.

1. The Latin original of this quotation is as follows: "Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eo perductus, ut non tantum recte facere possim, sed nisi recte facere non possim."

2. *Genial.* Native, natural, innate.

3. The word *charter* conveys to the Englishman the sense of "liberty secured by law."

4. "Perhaps Wordsworth alone," says Mr. R. H. Hutton, "of all the great men of that day, had seen the light of the countenance of God shining clear in the face of Duty."

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON."

1. That is, the cares of business and worldly life put us out of sympathy with nature.

2. *Proteus.* In Grecian mythology, a son of Neptune. His peculiar power was that of changing his shape at will.

3. *Triton.* The son of Neptune and Amphitrite, and his father's trumpeter.

THE LOVE OF BOOKS.

1. Shakespeare's "Othello."

2. Spenser's "Faerie Queen."

THE GAIN OF BOOKS.

1. That this prayer was answered literally, we know now; for Wordsworth, by common critical consent, takes his place with the great immortals.

AFTER-THOUGHT.

1. The river Duddon, which Wordsworth has celebrated in a series of sonnets, empties into the Irish Sea, and divides Lancashire from Cumberland in the "lake" region of England.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

1. *Rime.* White or hoar frost.
2. *Cerement.* Grave-cloth.
3. This pathetic fact is mentioned in the report to Parliament.

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

1. Psalm xiv, 1.
2. *Wains.* Wagons or harvest-carts.
3. *Chimar.* Robe.
4. *Centaur's.* The reference is to Nessus, the centaur, whose poisoned robe was given to Hercules, thus insuring the latter's death in agony.
5. *Glassed.* Mirrored.
6. *Wist.* Knew.

COWPER'S GRAVE.

1. In Cowper's correspondence during the Olney period there are many references to his pet hares, his gardening, and his greenhouse.
2. Cowper was always provided for by friends, who

either found him occupation or cherished his companionship in their own homes.

3. In his periods of depression, Cowper avowed himself deserted of man and God alike.

4. Matthew xxvii, 46.

WORK.

1. *Assoil.* Release.

SUBSTITUTION.

1. *Faunus.* The god of pastoral minstrelsy.

2. *Spheric laws self-chanted.* A reference to the harmony of the spheres, whose perfect adjustment to each other, the philosophers taught, produced a concord of sweet sounds.

FUTURITY.

1. *Witch.* Bewitch.

2. *New Memnons.* A reference to the statue of Memnon, which was said to give forth music at the rising of the sun.

THE LOOK.

1. The incident is recorded by Luke xxii, 61, *seq.*

THE MEANING OF THE LOOK.

1. The word Peter in Greek signifies a stone.

2. A reference to Matt. iv, 7, the words being quoted from Psa. xci, 11, 12.

3. John xiii, 6–9.

WORK AND CONTEMPLATION.

1. *Barcarole.* The song of the Venetian gondolier.

2. *Mirk.* Dark.

ROBERT BROWNING.

AN EPISTLE.

1. *This town.* Bethany.

2. *Exhibition.* In the medical sense of "administration."

3. *Figment.* The story of Lazarus is to him a fiction, but an exceptional fiction.

4. Just as a beggar of middle-life, with fixed ideas and habits, who should suddenly come into a fortune, and find himself without the power of handling it wisely, so Lazarus, temporarily admitted to heaven, and returned to earth again, has, in the change, lost all sense of the proportion of things.

5. The thought is: Lazarus, in his changed view of things, regards death as a natural and not altogether unhappy thing; but a word or gesture, suggesting the power of evil, throws him into an agony of fear, just as in the case of their former teacher, who was startled at their heedless recitation of a charm which had power to upturn a universe.

6. *Thou* (Abib) *and the child have* (for him, *i. e.*, Lazarus) *each*, etc.

7. *Greek fire.* The precursor of gunpowder, and a highly-inflammable substance.

8. *When Rome*, etc. During our Lord's ministry, Palestine was subject to Roman sway. Shortly after his death, the troublous character of the Jews brought upon their country the sharp punishment of the destruction of Jerusalem by Roman arms.

9. Aleppo was a city of Syria, and the blue-flowering borage was supposed to have peculiar and powerful medicinal qualities.

10. This bit of detail is added to account scientifically (if possible) for the peculiar impression made upon him by Lazarus. The country, the appearance of the moon, the

wailing wind, and the fatigue, had all had an effect in making him susceptible to narratives of the supernatural.

11. *Ambiguous Syrian.* His letter-carrier.

12. *Jerusalem's repose.* That is, when he arrives at the capital, and has a good opportunity for rest, he will be able to write of more sensible things.

13. The postscript, however, tells the story of his heart's hope, "the yearning cry of the human heart for a God of love, the consciousness of the complete satisfaction, the peace, the rest, that the knowledge of such a truth would give."

SAUL.

1. So in Rabbi Ben Ezra:

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be
The last of life for which the first was made."

2. A reference to 1 Samuel xvii, 45, where David meets Goliath.

3. These lines indicate the scene of the writing of this reminiscence. He is in the fields at dawn, looking at Hebron being unveiled by the sun, and at Kidron renewing the verdure blighted by the sunshine of the day before.

4. The armlet was part of the insignia of royalty, and is still worn by Oriental princes. Kitto reports that the armlets of the king of Persia were worth five millions of dollars.

5. This is the turning-point of David's power to help. It was to this outburst of love that the vision of Christ was revealed. It is connected immediately with the line, "*Then* the truth came upon me," etc.

6. The thought is that, upon looking over God's universe, he is convinced of his own want of perfection and of God's perfectness. Shall he then, a man, desire any good for a fellow-man which God will not? Certainly not, else man would in love outstrip the Divine. He desires for Saul a new life, God too desires it; hence the vision of Christ, the source of the new life, to whom David directs Saul.

7. *Impuissance.* Weakness.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

1. That is, I do not remonstrate that Youth, amassing flowers, sighed, "Which rose," etc.

2. The "honest doubt" of Tennyson ("In Memoriam"), which is characteristic only of strong and aspiring natures.

3. Does care disturb the crop-full bird? Does doubt fret the maw-crammed beast?

4. *Hold.* In the sense of deriving a right or title. The thought is, Our nature is more like that of God who gives than that of his tribes who take.

5. Whose chief thought is to provide for bodily well-being.

6. The best use of the body is to minister to the soul.

7. Nevertheless, all God's gifts are good; life in the flesh is not necessarily or wholly an evil; and right it is for the heart to enjoy gratefully the power and perfection of God seen on every side.

8. Youth should pass to maturity more godlike from its enjoyment of, and association with, all these riches of his inheritance. Here, and in the following stanzas, Youth is personified and speaking.

9. *Indue.* Put on.

10. Youth is a time of uncertainty; it has to make judgments without experience, and in the midst of the conflict. Maturity furnishes a proper perspective and the knowledge of good and evil.

11. It is enough if with age one has such a development of spirit that he knows things good, right, and infinite, just as he knows his hand to be his own.

12. Supply the relatives: Was I *whom* . . . Were they whom . . . right? The reference is to the aims of life about which moralists strive.

13. The world judges a man by his "work;" God judges him by his "worth."

14. The figure of the potter's wheel is found in Isaiah lxiv, 8; Jeremiah xviii, 6; Romans ix, 20, 21.

15. References to the embellishments of the cup or vase.

16. A reference to our Savior's words in Matt. xxvi, 29.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

IN MEMORIAM.

1. This is the intuitional argument for immortality in two lines.

2. These titles are entirely arbitrary, and given simply as a hint at the dominant thought in the passages following.

3. The "him" has not been identified, but the idea has been called the Creed of Goethe.

4. *Dead selves.* Not simply adverse, but *all* experiences of human life.

5. A reference to the customs at ancient funerals, where professional mourners gave violent expression to grief.

6. The thought of this section is, that grief with love may discipline to high character; is, in fact, an experience upon which one may indeed rise to "higher things."

7. Bereavement gathers gloom, and in the gloom, Sorrow raises doubts, hinting that even Nature may be a hollow mockery.

8. That is, he envies not any rest which is the result of insensibility.

9. Bereavement implies love, and love is a great and substantial good.

10. The connection and argument is as follows: The preceding section had introduced the thought of Christmas. Christmas is a day of hope. The Christ who raised Lazarus is still in the world, with whatever revelation of the future life is needed for the simplest of his creatures. Mary had no curiosity about the world beyond, from which her brother had just been brought, so content was her heart in the rapture of being with her brother and with her

Lord. Though her faith was mainly affection, yet it would be a distinct disservice to disturb that faith by the asserted superiority of a faith based upon reason. The reference is, of course, to the scene at Bethany, recorded by John xi and xii.

11. That is, Lazarus made no answer which, as a revelation from the other world, would have made it easier to believe that "Blessed are the dead."

12. A faith reached through contest with doubt has its own worth, but it is not necessarily higher or better than Mary's faith achieved in the strength of a pure affection. A faith through form has its uses and value, and this may be brought home in a crisis to the man who finds his faith-beyond-the-form an inadequate quantity.

13. Our intuitions of immortality were interpreted to us and given form in the teaching of Christ. Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel.

14. *Closest words.* That is, in the philosophical terms of the schools.

15. A reference to the uncivilized inhabitants of the Pacific islands, a type of the lowest intelligence.

16. A reference to the life of Christ. Even with the example of Christ before him, the Christian does not, in this world, realize his ideal; nevertheless he must strive as he can until the end, when his measure of worth is "gathered in."

17. In reading this much-quoted passage it should be noted that the emphasis comes upon the contrasted terms "trust" and "know."

18. The thought of immortality is suggested by that in us which is most like God. Nature suggests destruction and willful waste, but the heart of man is unwilling to accept the suggestion. The poet, therefore, falls back on faith, and, looking up in prayer to God, trusts the larger hope, which his heart cherishes and will not resign.

19. "That the way to God is a steep stair, rising through night to light, is a familiar conception. But grandly orig-

inal is the thought that this stair is an 'altar'-stair, and that the great world itself is an altar, upon which everything that lives, if it will save its life, must offer itself in sacrifice to God."

20. *Ravine.* Plunder.

21. *Thy voice.* That is, the voice of his friend.

22. The solution of the dark problems of the present life is referred to the clearness and coherence of the future life.

23. The poet imagines his friend in heaven vastly in advance of, but not entirely lost to sympathy with him.

24. Some have found in this a reference to the late Lord Beaconsfield, who was a Jew at a time when the Jews were not in favor in English politics.

25. The poet, in recalling the pleasure of the earthly friendship, makes it the basis for anticipation of even greater pleasure under the conditions of life in the spirit-world.

26. The remembrance of the dead friend takes shape in a succession of dreams. He sees his friend, but finds "a trouble" in his eye, which, upon waking, he discovers to have been his own distress of soul transferred to the face of his friend.

27. In this and the succeeding sections the poet describes his friend's life as it might have been—a noble, useful, happy, and blessed life.

28. Hallam was engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily.

29. In the development of the poem, the poet, having passed the acute stage of grief, had begun to acquiesce in his loss, and find content in memories of the past and hopes for the future. Here his grief overwhelms him again.

30. In this section the poet describes more particularly his friend's character, accomplishments, and influence.

31. The Englishman's view of the French Revolution.

32. *Rathe.* Younger.

33. In this section, while the poet describes the condition of heart and mind required for spiritual communion

with the dead, he also sets forth the condition required for proper communion with God, the Father of spirits.

34. It has been suggested that the reference may be to one of the poet's sisters.

35. The reference here may be to Rev. F. D. Maurice, or Rev. W. F. Robertson; perhaps to Hallam himself.

36. Exodus xxxii.

37. Again Christmas has come, and the thought of it moves the poet to a song of exhortation that Christ's reign may begin at once in the hearts of all people.

38. The poet has a place for knowledge, but it is not first; rather is it subordinate to wisdom, especially that wisdom which is from above.

39. That is, knowledge, uncontrolled by wisdom, becomes wanton and reckless, and invites disaster.

40. Arthur Hallam. He was but twenty-two at his death.

41. 1 Cor. xv, 32.

42. His argument is, that if men are only clay, and die with their bodies, of what moment, then, is science, or the noble struggle against evil or adverse fate?

43. "This section contains a remarkable exposition of the nebular hypothesis as sanctioned by geologists." The argument is, that man crowns a creation in which development is the normal process. It is absurd to think that man, possessing love and truth as nature does not, should have no higher development possible.

44. We do not apprehend God by any effort of the understanding. He is not revealed to us by any grandeur in nature, nor by any argument of adaptation, but directly through faith to heart and conscience.

45. These sections contain the poet's conclusion of the whole matter—that the universe is under the administration of Love, and that all things work together for good.

46. Another reference to French instability and impetuosity. Comp. Note 31.

THE PALACE OF ART.

1. Saturn, shining as it does by the light of the sun upon it, casts upon his ring perpetual shadows.

2. *Arras.* Tapestry. Note the perfection of the word-pictures which follow.

3. A reference to the fact that olive-leaves are whitish-gray upon the underside, and that this color shows when the wind turns the leaves over.

4. *The Ionian father.* Homer.

5. The picture here is a symbol of France in the great revolution.

6. *She.* The soul.

7. *Verulam.* Lord Bacon.

8. The statue of Memnon, near Thebes, was said to give forth the sound of music at the rising of the sun.

9. A reference to the swine of Gadara. Matt. viii, 32.

10. The pitiable death of Herod is related in Acts xii.

11. Compare the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel v.

12. *Circumstance.* The surrounding universe.

13. *Dully.* Poetical for dull.

14. "The essence of the sin was not culture, but the selfishness and aristocraticism of cultured pride; not delight, whether of the senses or of the mind, but delight unshared by others; not abstention from the partisanship of creeds, but contemptuous isolation from those who accept them, and lack of sympathetic appreciation of the truth they contain. Such isolation, such pride, such culture, are indeed damnable." Bayne.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

1. *He.* Sir Bedivere.

2. *Brand.* Sword.

3. *Excalibur.* The mystic sword received by Arthur from the Lady of the Lake, which Sir Bedivere is now commanded to return to her.

4. Bedivere, in the "Coming of Arthur," is described as "the first of all his knights, bold in heart and act and word."

5. *Lief.* Beloved.

6. *Lightly.* Swiftly.

7. Note here the subtlety with which Sir Bedivere argues against his clear sense of duty.

8. *For.* Here in the sense of "because."

9. "Never yet in any poetry did any sword, flung in air, flash so superbly."

10. *Northern morn.* The Aurora Borealis.

11. *Samite.* A silk stuff generally interwoven with gold.

12. The five lines following contain "as clear a piece of ringing, smiting, clashing sound as any to be found in Tennyson."

13. *Ware.* Aware.

14. *Black-stoled.* Robed in black.

15. *Cuisses.* Armor for the thighs.

16. *Elders.* The wise men from the east, led by the star to the birthplace of Christ at Bethlehem.

17. The Celtic heaven, where all wounds are healed and where dwells perpetual youth.

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

1. *Oorali.* A drug which acts by paralyzing the nerves of motion, whilst those of sensation are left unimpaired.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

1. A reference to the early conviction of his call to be a poet, and of his first inspirations.

2. By this we may understand the poet's critics, who disparaged alike his work and his calling.

3. Describing the themes over which his poetic gift threw graces of verse and splendid imagination.

4. A reference to his numerous and extended attempts at suitably interpreting the story of King Arthur.

5. A testimony to the eagerness of soul with which, even in old age, he followed the spirit of his calling as a prophet of truth.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

OUR MASTER.

1. *Holocaust.* Burnt offering.

2. Cf. Coleridge:

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small."

3. Litanies and liturgies here stand for religious forms in general.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS.

1. *Mete and bound.* Measure and limit.

2. Cf. Tennyson:

"But O, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!"

3. Isaiah xlii, 3.

4. *Fronded.* Having leaf-like expansions which include both stem and foliage.

MY SOUL AND I.

1. Whittier's part in the anti-slavery struggle is well known.

2. *Inane.* n. Void.

3. Genesis xxxii, 26.

4. Cf. Wordsworth:

"Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music. There 's a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE LEGEND BEAUTIFUL.

1. The Elysian Fields are, in Greek mythology, the abode of the blessed after death.

2. Matthew xxv, 40.

THE BLIGHT OF WORLDLINESS.

1. *Morituri Salutamus.* "We who are about to die, salute you!" The Roman gladiators, before engaging in their contests, made this salutation before the imperial throne.

THE LADDER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE.

1. St. Augustine, Sermon III, *De Ascensione*: "De vitiis nostris scalam nobis facimus, si vitia ipsa calcamus."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.

1. Compare Wordsworth:

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy!"

2. *We Sinais climb.* We come into exalted surroundings.

3. *Benedicite.* The canticle or hymn beginning, in Latin, "Benedicite omnia opera Domini;" in English, "O, all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord."

4. *Nice.* Fastidious, discriminating, exact.

5. *Rushes* were formerly strewn upon floors by way of covering.

6. *Maiden.* New, fresh, hitherto untried.

7. *Made morn.* Sir Launfal comes out of the gloom like the sun out of the night.

8. *'Gan shrink.* Began to shrink.

9. Luke xxi, 3.

10. *Wold.* An open tract of country.

11. *Corbel.* A projection from the vertical face of a wall, serving as a support.

12. *Seneschal.* Steward.

13. *Reck.* To take heed of.

14. The same idea of the Christ-life noted in the preceding poems by Lowell.

15. Expresses the knight's contrition.

16. St. John x, 9.

A GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

1. *Savage clime.* North America.

2. Daniel v, 5.

3. *Thebes.* An ancient city of Bœotia in Greece. Mythology tells that, during the building of the walls of Thebes, Amphion had but to strike his lyre, and large stones followed whither he led the way.

4. *There most is He, for there is he most needed.* The same idea of Christ's protectorate over the weak and the downtrodden that we note in "A Parable," "The Search," and "The Vision of Sir Launfal." In this poem we find an application of the idea to a living, practical interest.

5. *More force in names than most men dream of.* Cf. Shakespeare: "What's in a name?"

6. *Fond.* Foolish.

7. Hampden was mortally wounded in a skirmish on Chalgrove Field in 1643.

THE SEARCH.

1. *Thebes.* A chief city of ancient Egypt, remarkable to-day for its splendid ruins.

2. *Witless.* Wanting thought; therefore, careless.

A PARABLE.

1. The Jews looked for the Messiah to come with pomp and glory. So, to-day, men forget the humility, the lowliness of the Master.

2. This description refers to any worship that considers form, doctrine, or precedent to the exclusion of the more immediate applications of Christ's teachings.

3. Cf. Matthew xxv, 24, 25.

4. Cf. Matthew xxv, 45.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 013 705 4